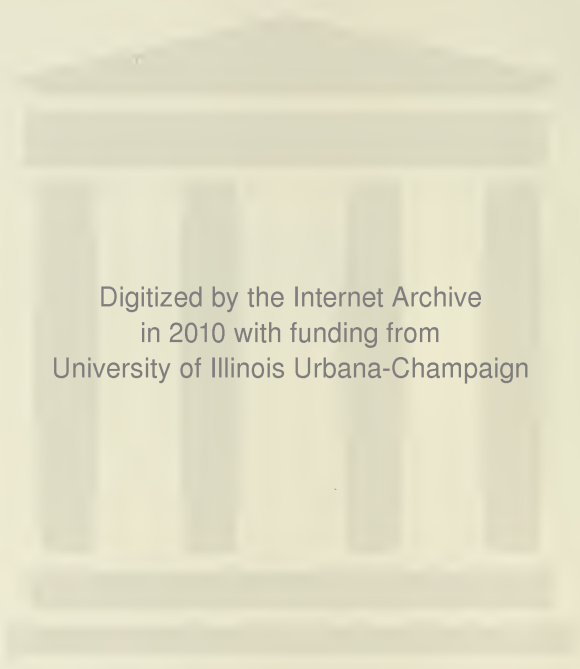


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MY LORDS OF STROGUE.

*A CHRONICLE OF IRELAND, FROM THE CONVENTION
TO THE UNION.*

BY
HON. LEWIS WINGFIELD,
AUTHOR OF 'LADY GRIZEL,' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. III.



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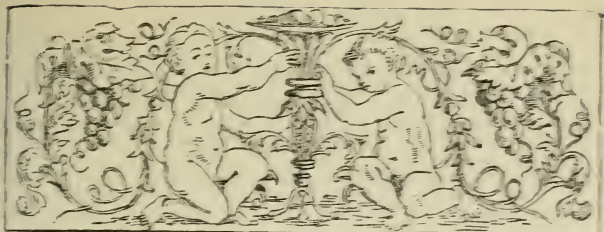
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God of Vengeance ! smite us
With Thy shaft sublime,
If one bond unite us
Forged in fraud or crime.
But if humbly kneeling
We implore Thine ear,
For our rights appealing—
God of Nations ! Hear !

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MY LORDS OF STROGUE.

CHAPTER I.

SAWDUST IN THE CHANCELLOR'S DOLL.



F the cits of Dublin during this time were in the throes of apprehension and suspense, the Lords and Commons were enduring the agonies of evil conscience. They regretted that parliament had not been prorogued in order that they might have pretended ignorance as to what was passing; for they felt that the world was pointing the finger of derision at them. Not that the English world—the *beau monde* that is—cared one way or the other. In London it was always difficult to arouse interest in the affairs of a remote colony, whose ways were like

those of Madagascar. The Viceroy's bleatings appeared weekly in the *Gentlemen's Magazine*, and coffee-house critics barely glanced at them, for they were always the same. His excellency was always lamenting the misbehaviour of the populace; was always delighted to report that four or five hundred rebels had on such a day been sent to another sphere. The scraps of poetry that stood cheek by jowl beside this gabble were infinitely more amusing to the critics. Rhapsodies on Chloe's shoe-string—a ravishing account of the last balloon ascent. But these delectable topics failed to amuse young Robert Emmett, whose heart, during weary weeks, was feeding on itself in the English metropolis. On his arrival there, he had been kindly taken by the hand by my Lord Moira, who had held a seat in the Houses of both countries, and who, shocked at what he heard, rose up in his place and protested that it was time for the British public to interfere. A member suggested lightly that there was an Irish parliament whose province it was to look after such matters. Lord Moira hung his head. He knew too well how low that parliament had fallen—how mean-spirited were those who were haggling over the price of their birthright.

The sneers of the Londoners were hard to bear. The dangers which seemed to menace the Irish senators terrified their timid souls. From the 24th to the 31st of May no mail-coach had arrived in Dublin.

There was no news save what the Viceroy chose to dribble out; bonfires were seen upon the Wicklow hills. Awful reports were circulating hourly—reports that warrior priests were in possession of Arklow; had arrived at Bray; were at their very gates. If such should prove to be the case, then was the career ended of the faithful Lords and Commons. The sulky scowls of the Liberty-boys boded no good. There would be a massacre of the Innocents. What could Heaven be about to allow its chosen and elect to suffer such gnawing torments? The scum had been evilly ill treated; but not enough, it seemed, to make them meek and mild. If they were beaten now, they should receive an extra trouncing for presuming in this egregious manner to alarm their betters. Then General Lake started with his army; all the regulars went with him. The capital was handed over to the custody of four thousand yeomen, who—drunken, dissolute, uncurbed—proceeded to make hay while the blood-red sun was shining. Major Sirr and his Staghouse bloodhounds were a power in the state. From being town-major, a title scarcely legible in the list of public encumbrances, Sirr became invested, through the usefulness of his bully band, with all the real powers of the most absolute authority. He was growing rich, for among other trades he was a licensed victualler, owned Nelly's Coffee-house, and obtained the lucrative monopoly of supplying wines to prisoners.

He was also a virtuoso ; remitted triangle-torture, and sold tickets to his victims for extra light and air, in exchange for orders upon hapless wives for pictures, bric-a-brac, and household stuff. How, when so many came to a violent end, did such a monster escape assassination ? Because one of his first rules of conduct was to push forward somebody else to perform a dangerous job. When his hounds had pulled down the quarry, then would he come forward and strike an attitude upon the body of the hunted beast. It is in the hot-bed of public calamity that such fungi grow quick to ripeness. So soon as the counties rose to arms and caused a panic, the life and liberty of every man was at his disposal. If one offended him, he charged him with high treason and swept him off to prison, and a court-martial. Just now, to be accused was much the same as to be convicted. One day, a professor of language was seized and carted to the Riding-school to receive five hundred lashes because a letter was found in his pocket written in the French tongue. Another day (all this before the month of May was out), a gentleman was pistolled in the street by an intoxicated yeoman because his hair was cut short. Of course he was a ' Croppy ' ! It transpired afterwards that he was an invalid recovering from fever. Another time, a party broke into a baker's shop at dawn, demanding bread. The oven had not long been lighted—the baking was not com-

plete. No matter; his Majesty's servants would eat the dough half-baked—aye, and wash it down as it stuck in the throat with a jorum of raw whisky. Strange to relate, the whole party was taken ill. Of course the villanous Croppies had poisoned the servants of his Majesty. An example should be made of the malignants! (How fond were these pioneers of a new era of making examples!) The baker and his wife and his two sons were dragged into the street and shot down, without time for shriving, in front of their own door.

Lieutenant Hepenstall, as a type of his class, rose to unenviable celebrity. He stood six feet two, was strong and broad—could lift a ton. The expression of his face was mild as milk—the blackness of his heart was dark as hell. Full of zeal for his Majesty's service, he took to hanging on his own brawny back those persons whose physiognomies he judged to be characteristic of rebellion. First, he knocked down his man to quiet him. His garters did duty as handcuffs. His cravat was a convenient rope. With a powerful chuck he drew his victim's head as high as his own and trotted about with his burden, considerately advising him to pray for King George, since prayers would be wasted on his own damned Popish soul, till the gulping wretch's neck was broken. Is it any marvel that the bullet, the sabre, the lash, the halter, should have been met by the pike, the scythe, the hatchet, and the firebrand?

Major Sirr became all-powerful, and shortly after Terence's mishap had words with Cassidy. He came to look on his old ally with a feeling akin to contempt, for he considered a man mean-spirited who had not the courage of his own iniquity. The time was over now when masks were comfortable wearing. He, Major Sirr, had never stooped to wear one; if Cassidy intended to feather his nest, now was the time, or never. He roundly told him so when the giant called in at the major's lodgings to claim his portion of the £1,000 reward. The latter's brow-tufts came down over his nose; he laughed a sardonic laugh and shook his pear-shaped head. He was specially spiteful over this reward, by reason of the slashes he had received from Phil. True, they were mere flesh-wounds; but he resented having his legs carved about in this reckless way by an amateur surgeon.

'If ye'd have your part of the money,' he said, with incisive scorn, 'come and claim it in the public street. Don't come to me in the dead o' night as though the bumbailiffs were creeping at your heels.'

He held by his decision, and the two cronies quarrelled. Indeed they were very near a duel; but Cassidy, with commendable prudence, observed, 'There is enough discord already among the patriots, so don't let us fall into a similar mistake.' They snarled and showed their teeth, like dogs; then made it up, as wisdom dictated.

Cassidy could not well explain the reasons for his secrecy. He could not say that if he were known to have accepted her cousin's blood-money there would be an impassable gulf 'twixt him and Doreen for ever. Sirr would have only gibed in that a man who was such a rascal should be sighing after an honest wench; so he gave up the blood-money. Cassidy was very undecided at this moment. Prudence whispered that the major's counsel was good. He knew, too, that as things were going, he could not wear his mask much longer. What was he to do? Unless he were careful he would fall between two stools. Doreen had never given her clumsy admirer any encouragement; would probably refuse him even though he hoarded mines of gold. Was she not rich herself? If he could not have Doreen, it would be quite as well to have money; and he could not earn his proper wage without openly joining the Battalion of Testimony. It was a very delicate question. Would it not be best to sound Miss Wolfe once more? Maidens are coy. Some who are prepared to take us if we persevere, require much wooing. Maybe the fair Doreen was one of these. On second thoughts he did not quite think she was, with her calm bearing and solemn eyes; but at all events it was worth the trial. No harm could come of that.

He determined, therefore, to make a journey to

Glas-aitch-é, and trim his sails according to the wind that blew there. Meanwhile it was a dirty trick that his old ally had played him. Yet, after all, it mattered little. The sweetness of revenge is better than guineas. His long-concealed loathing for his unconscious rival had found vent at last, and he felt the better for it, independent of any considerations of self. The odious, good-tempered, bright-visaged, careless young councillor! He dared to aspire to Doreen, did he? The same words as the giant had muttered as he stood before the sleeper, he spoke again through his grinding teeth. If he could not have the maid himself, the councillor should not have her. That unlucky person was sick unto death in duress, with the gallows looming close at hand. There was comfort—great comfort in that. The thousand pounds might go to the devil—or to Major Sirr. Decidedly it would be well to make a trip northward, for though he played his game cunningly and let out useless Castle secrets with much vapouring, yet were the chiefs of the popular party beginning to suspect him. Even unsuspecting Tom Emmett, whom he had been to see in Kilmainham gaol a few days back, twitted him with his liberty. The double game was no longer possible. He would have to make up his mind presently either to assume the palm of martyrdom for Doreen's sake, with a pardon in his portfolio for past delinquencies, or, flinging off boldly all disguise, to pocket the

guineas and the obloquy which were the portion of the Staghouse crew.

The sufferings of the Lords and Commons were endured also in full measure by the Privy Council, who found themselves in a quandary. Lord Moira's little agitation in London was not without its effect, although folks did sneer at the wild Irish. On leaving St. Stephen's, the head of opposition linked his arm in my Lord Moira's, and begged to inquire whether he had not been drawing on his imagination.

'Your countrymen are so dreadfully imaginative, you know!' he said plaintively. 'I never forget the story of "potatoes and point" that somebody told me. So Irish! What is it? Oh! some notion of a Hibernian feast on a frugal scale in the far west, where the guests sat in a circle, each with his potato, which was dipped from time to time to give it flavour into a pot of salt in the middle. When the salt began to fail, each potato was *pointed* at the relish instead of being dipped in it, which many declared to be an economical improvement, for imagination did the rest! The Irish, you know, pull the long-bow terribly, and disconcert you by themselves believing their own lies.'

Being at last persuaded that Lord Moira's details were facts which had taken place lately, and would take place each day for months, unless summarily stopped, Mr. Pitt's rival expressed much delight.

This was a hole in the harness of Mr. Pitt, of which he would proceed straightway to make the most brilliant use. But Mr. Pitt saw the pair walking together, and, divining at once the subject of their discourse, resolved to forestall any rude suggestions which might be made. He wrote accordingly to Lord Clare, expressing surprise at the reports, bidding him act with discretion—tempering a just firmness with lenity; deploring and disapproving a waste of life; suggesting fewer executions and more close imprisonment. The chancellor was annoyed at being thus interfered with. He was doing his work steadily and well. It was all very fine for an English minister to prate in platitudes, at a distance, about firmness and lenity. He would reap the full benefit of the transaction when it was completed, whilst his tools in Ireland were laying in a harvest of opprobrium. Then, as his mind worked, the look of anxiety cleared from Lord Clare's face. What happened to the rest of the Privy Council mattered little to him. *He* was the guiding pilot. To *him* must come honours, an English peerage, a seat at St. Stephen's. There might he give a loose rein to his ambition. This letter, though, might prove useful in the matter of Terence Crosbie. The Viceroy's prerogative of mercy should be exercised first of all in the case of the misguided youth, son of the old friend who persisted in remaining so singularly cold as to his

fate. Why were my lady's letters so cold? he wondered. Never mind. Her son should be saved, if possible, without more parley.

His plan, however, met with unexpected resistance from Lord Camden, who was usually so ductile. To his amazement that effete person declined altogether to interfere. Vainly the chancellor brow-beat him, employing those artifices of language and manner which were wont to make him quiver. The more he argued the more the Viceroy mumbled. Like all weak natures, he could be wofully obstinate at times in the wrong place. He had worked himself up to consider the unhappy Terence as his own private victim, because, in his case, he had acted on his own authority for once, and had even been visited with the sublime inspiration of the reward. He clung to his victim with the tenacity of a bulldog; nothing should wrest from his lips the savoury morsel. For his part, he declared, he thought Mr. Pitt barely civil. He desired these hopeless Irish people to be well kept under, and yet he gave vent to windy phrases which his coadjutors in Dublin could not possibly act upon, without changing their course and becoming laughing-stocks. He, for one, declined to stultify himself. As for this sprig of nobility who had disgraced the ermine and dirtied his nest, it was essential above all things to make an example of him, lest any other misguided

youth of the same rank should be deluded enough to follow his pernicious lead.

Lord Clare, like a good diplomat, dropped the subject for that time, and went on to speak of the other imprisoned leaders. What was to be done with them? Could they be executed? No! It would be impolitic to martyrise them too openly, for they were well known in Dublin as patriotic and single-minded young men who led blameless lives. Moreover it was evident from this epistolary hint that Mr. Pitt would object to such a proceeding.

‘I’d try ’em by court-martial!’ mumbled the Viceroy from the head of the council board, taking snuff.

‘State prisoners!’ retorted Arthur Wolfe with unusual warmth, from the bottom. ‘Better not go through the farce of trial at all.’

The Viceroy glared, and the chancellor bit his lip. Why could not Arthur Wolfe hold his stupid tongue? Lord Clare felt more than ever that this weak-minded friend must be got out of the way somehow. On him, as attorney-general, would of course fall the duties of crown prosecutor. Dear, dear! people seemed to throw obstacles in his way on purpose, as though his task were not entangled enough already! All this considered, these members of the Directory, over whose capture there had been such crowing, seemed disposed to revenge themselves by becoming white elephants. They could

not be hanged *en masse* without creating scandal; it was not even certain that they would be convicted if brought to trial, for against several of their number very little tangible evidence could be brought. Their names on a list—their presence at a meeting. This was not enough. Of course the Battalion could be brought forward with fictitious evidence—but Lord Clare shrank from this, except as a last resource. Besides, they were not to be hanged—that was settled. What then could be done with them? A light punishment, as for a misdemeanour, would drive the Orangemen to madness, who were shouting for blood, after the manner of religious bigots. Petty larceny and high treason could not be placed on the same level. Could not somebody suggest something?

‘I have an idea,’ mild Arthur Wolfe murmured, as he nervously gnawed a pen. ‘Banishment might be proposed to them, on conditions which might be made to look like mutual accommodation. For instance, make them confess their offences and explain the ins and outs of their scheme, in order that it may be guarded against in future. By confession they would show the world that we’ve not been tilting against windmills. Surely the establishment of the traitorous conspiracy by the testimony of the principal actors in it might be fairly taken as an equivalent for the lives of a few men, without loss of dignity on our part?’

The chancellor mused. The notion was ingenious. The Viceroy drew a picture of a gallows on his paper, and gabbled of court-martials in an injured tone.

‘Very pretty, but they would not consent,’ affirmed Lord Clare, at last.

‘I think they would,’ returned the attorney-general, blushing. ‘In fact, the idea is not mine. Tom Emmett suggested it to me.’

‘You’ve been to see them?’

‘Yes. I’ve been to Kilmainham and to Newgate. It’s a shocking sight,’ answered Arthur Wolfe, kindling, ‘to see decent men loaded with irons, mixed up with thieves, insulted hourly by the low janisseries of Major Sirr! The poor fellows are so shocked at the accounts which reach them, and see so plainly the futility of struggling now, that they would do anything, I think, to stop the effusion of blood.’

‘If they would consent to banishment for life, and let us into the secrets of the society, we should be well out of the job,’ the chancellor decided. ‘Curran shall be sent to put it to the rascals. The blackguard has influence with them. Meanwhile we will turn on the screw by bringing the worst to trial. Sure Mr. Pitt must not mind just a few being strung up.’

So it was provisionally arranged; but the affair did not run on wheels. The patriots were captious, held

out for special terms, dictated alterations in the proposed agreement, behaved in a flippant manner—not meekly and decorously as people should who feel the hemp about their necks.

‘It must be understood,’ they declared, ‘that they were to mention no names, criminate no person; that after an examination before the secret committee of Lords, upon the intentions and aims of the United Irish Society, they were to be sent to America, as Tone had been before them.’ Here was insolence! This in order, of course, that they might join Tone in France, and stir up the French again. Contumacious traitors!

The chancellor became exceeding wroth. The screw must be twisted with a vengeance, he said. ‘What a pity that they could not be hanged *en masse*! One or two at any rate must suffer—just to teach the others to behave themselves.’ Lord Camden suggested Terence, the malignant aristocrat, as a good victim; but the chancellor fenced the matter off, and overruled his excellency. Arthur Wolfe implored and begged—vowed that the words would choke his utterance as he made his opening speech—swore that he could not, would not, come forward to prosecute—even so far forgot himself as to fling the pens and paper about, and beard the Privy Council with upbraiding words. Then my Lord Camden absolutely cackled. Mr. Speaker and Mr. Prime Sergeant laid their hands upon their swords.

How indecent ! Luckily they sat with closed doors. Here was a split in the cabinet when unity was so essential. Lord Clare's harsh voice rose above the hubbub. He coerced them all to order with verbal whips, like the keeper of some menagerie. The animals, cowed, lay down and growled. The peace was kept for this once, but the astute chancellor perceived that something must be done with promptitude, or the whole of his beautiful fabric, which only needed a roof now to finish it, would come tumbling about his ears. Truly he deserved well of his master, for he laboured hard. He discovered that the excellent, the humane, Arthur Wolfe was too good and clever for his position—almost too good for this world; and so he was graciously put on the shelf—I mean the Bench—and raised to the peerage of Kilwarden, *en attendant* a front seat in heaven. As my Lord Kilwarden we shall know him for the future—the same weak well-meaning man as ever—compelled to listen to false witness from his high chair, but unable to interfere because his mouth was stopped by the fur which trimmed his coronet. The solicitor-general, Toler, was promoted to the vacant place, and proved to be a prosecutor 'of the right sort,' a fitting *pendant* to the jury, in the state-trials which commenced immediately in the sessions-house in Green Street, hard by Newgate prison.

These proceedings followed each other with the celerity which marked the chief events of '98. The rebels had thrown down their gauntlet on the 23rd of May. By the 1st of June, Kildare was quieted. It was on the 11th of June that the court was first opened for the trial of the patriots, whose chief advocate was Curran; whilst horrible reports were arriving hourly from Wexford, which were made the most of, to keep the jury up to the mark. The moment which the little lawyer had prophetically seen was come, when he of the silver tongue was to stand forth and boldly wrestle for noble human life with the demons of Treachery and Malice. The brave little man shrank not from the task, fraught as it was with personal danger to himself. He bore a charmed life. The prisoners in their beds at Newgate could hear his earnest tones in the hot night through opened windows, haranguing the jury till daylight; could detect the trotting of his pony as he returned in the morning to the Priory—no longer hospitably open as of yore, but bolted and barred, with shutters closed and loop-holed, in a besieged condition, for timid Sara's sake. That which occupied the sessions-house in Green Street was the only civil tribunal which existed during this troublous time. Except in the instances of the six state-trials, there was no law in town or country but martial law, which is terrible enough even when fairly administered; how much more

awful then when conducted, as it was, by excited Irishmen—rabid with religious fury, heated by rancour and revenge.

Events had marched quickly. The chancellor had nothing to complain of, for, with a few trifling checks, everything went well enough. The people had been maddened into committing themselves. All classes were at sixes and sevens. The menagerie was in a chaotic condition. The wolf snarled at the hyena, the bear showed his tusks at the tiger-cat. The senate was as degraded as its bitterest foe could desire. But what an exasperating world it is! How true the trite old maxim about the slip 'twixt cup and lip! Lord Clare saw (not far off, neither) the abolition of the Irish parliament. He heard his own voice ringing along the rafters of the English House of Lords. He pictured himself high in office—why not premier some day? But all of a sudden an event occurred which had never entered into his calculations—a rap came on his knuckles, swift and agonising, which woke him from his vision to see that it was air.

That agitation of Lord Moira's went farther in its effect than its author dreamed. Mr. Pitt perceived at once that it must cause him to change his tactics, and with presence of mind he resolved to do so instantly. 'How lucky,' he mused, as he sat under the comb of his friseur after a night's debauch, 'that this dust was not stirred up sooner!

Now it matters not. The effect I wish produced is made, and can't be unmade. But I must disavow the acts that made it. The thing has gone so far now that it must run along to the end by the force of its own impetus.' Then he reflected that it would not be amiss to write a warning to Lord Clare, which might be brought up against him later. He would let things go on quietly till other arrangements were completed, then announce his new purpose as a surprise, and act upon it on the instant.

So it came about that the English premier disarmed the opposition by recalling at a few hours' notice the then Viceroy, Lord Camden, and despatching to Ireland at once—with an energy that did him credit—a new one, who was instructed to carry on the work on a new principle. Lord Clare was thunderstruck. When the news came, his face lengthened by an ell. He thought not of broken puppets, which, having served their purpose, are tossed upon the dust-heap. A new Viceroy! Just at this crisis, too, when more than ever unity was strength. What if the new Viceroy should have a will of his own to clash with the lord chancellor's? That was unlikely, for Lord Clare was essentially a leader of men. He had coerced many viceroys, and thoroughly understood the business. There was no reason for supposing that this one would be more stubborn than the others. But he would of

necessity come raw to his work, would have to be taught, which would create delay. It was very provoking. Yet, after all, there was a good side even to this dilemma. Strong-willed or not, he would have to leave things alone during his pupilage. For the present he could not interfere much. Yet, turn the situation over as he would, my Lord Clare could not but see that Mr. Pitt had made a fool of him ; and it was with some misgiving that the chancellor went down in state to Kingstown to make his bow to his new master.

Mr. Pitt's choice was a most judicious one. He had to look for a man who was brave and honest, high-spirited, clear-headed—the antithesis to Camden. Some one who knew something of affairs, who was a soldier—in order that at this difficult juncture the reins of government and the command of the forces should be in one firm grasp. Some one who was experienced in the world's ways, who would be too wise to run a-muck or do anything Quixotic. Who would pull things straight gradually and with circumspection, so as not to stop the ball before it reached its goal, and yet who was too conspicuous for virtue for the opposition to jut forth the tongue at him. Just such a man was the Marquis Cornwallis, who had recently earned glorious laurels in India ; whom all the world respected because he was upright as well as worldly-wise.

The preparations of the new Viceroy had been made in secret. Therefore, the word of command being given, he started off, like the good soldier that he was, at a moment's notice, and arrived at Kingstown towards the end of June. As a salve to his predecessor's feelings, a nephew of Lord Camden's was attached as chief secretary—the young Viscount Castlereagh, who, report said, was promising. Lord Clare met the party with a toothsome smile, in all the bravery of tightly-fitting silk upon his dapper limbs, his rustling robes stiffened with gold lace, his lappeted wig powdered with perfumed flour. The viceregal state-coach was not in waiting, he regretted to say. The rapidity of his excellency's coming was extraordinary! My Lord Camden, who was living within a cordon of guards away in the Phoenix Park, had not yet resigned it. But his own poor coach was there (the one which cost four thousand guineas); if his excellency would so far honour him as to take a seat in it, it would be the proudest moment in the life of his humble servant.

Lord Cornwallis, thinking it a good opportunity of studying the notorious chancellor, accepted graciously; and the two jogged together along the high-road to Dublin, preceded by a body of the Liberty-rangers, who appeared to the military optic a sad set of clodpoles. Lord Clare descanted on the beauty of the scenery, the loveliness of Dublin

Bay, the delights of summer weather. Sure, his excellency must have had a splendid passage. Was he never sick? Lucky man! Never, never? This good beginning was a fine omen for the future. Might his career in Ireland win his Majesty's approval! and so on, and so forth. Vapid compliments! Lord Clare made himself as pleasant as he possibly could, and congratulated himself rather on his success. It is a fortunate circumstance that we do not abide in the Palace of Truth. The first impression which the coercer of viceroys left upon the mind of Lord Cornwallis, was one of a cruel eye, painfully glittering teeth, a smile to be distrusted, a voice which went through him like a knife.

'What of the people?' he asked somewhat abruptly; for he knew more than he liked about Lake's plans, and feared lest the obloquy which must attend them should be pinned to the new *régime*.

'The people!' echoed his companion, in a tone which spoke volumes—'the people! Ah, well! They've offended the King, and are having a hard time of it. To-morrow they will have a very hard time indeed, but no worse than they deserve; for by nightfall, if all goes well—why should it go ill?—a few hours hence, Wexford and Enniscorthy will be taken, the camp at Vinegar Hill will be a Golgotha—this deplorable folly will be at an end.'

Lord Cornwallis gave a sigh of relief. He had come expecting to see unpleasant sights, to be for the nonce a bandager instead of a carver of wounds. If the chancellor spoke truly, then was he indeed in luck, for the horrors attending this 'Golgotha,' as his companion picturesquely put it, would naturally be considered to belong to Lord Camden's vice-royalty, not his.

The cavalcade which had been rattling along came to a standstill. The Liberty-rangers, with oaths and curses, were striving to force a passage through a kneeling crowd which occupied the way; but the peasants who formed the crowd seemed to have no feeling as they knelt there in the middle of the road, with hats off and heads bowed down.

Vainly were the horses urged, vainly did the postilions, with artful flips of their long knotted lashes, strive to tickle into sensitiveness the soft bare arms of girls—their white necks, from which the hair was braided. They knelt there and moved not.

Lord Cornwallis looked out at the spectacle in surprise, and lowered the window-glass with a bang to bid the postilions respect the sex, in terms of indignant remonstrance. What singular people! So silent; they might be stone. His ear caught a distant wailing, very faint—a long way off—and a peculiar sound which recalled long-forgotten memories of youth. The falling of a flail—yes, that was

it. A lightning-flash of the past revealed to his mind's eye a warm-coloured, familiar threshing-floor, in which he used to play ere he grew hardened by war's vicissitudes. He remembered, as though it were yesterday, the chequered sunlight on the grain, the merry hum of life, the stalwart fellows raising their brawny arms in clock-like rhythm. He heard again the buzz of insects, the booming of gauze-winged beetles along the hedgerows; the exhilarating murmur which sings of teeming nature—of glorious summer. Why were these peasants turned to stone?

Lord Clare, forgetting himself, craned out of his window, and presumed at the very start to counter-order his chief's commands.

'Go on!' he screamed. 'Get through this riff-raff!'

Lord Cornwallis roughly bade him hold his peace.

'It's only a flogging,' the chancellor apologised.

'And this is the silent protest of the people! Have they sunk to this?' cried the Viceroy hoarsely, pulling at his cravat to ease the lump that was in his throat. 'Poor creatures! Ground down so low that they can protest only by their silence—a reverent silence, like that of onlookers at a martyrdom! Who is acting here? Call him forward.'

Presently an aide-de-camp returned through an archway with the sheriff. The aide's eyes were full of tears. He was a youth new to Ireland. This

pathetic method of protesting was strangely, weirdly tragic ! He had noted how, as the far-off moaning continued, and the thuds poured down in an unrelenting shower, these fair young necks had winced in concert, though no murmur passed their lips. Yet when the postilions flicked them, calling up red marks upon the skin, they made no movement, nor uttered cry. All their feeling was for the suffering victim on the triangle, in the barrack-yard yonder, whose life the cat was slowly beating out of him. None was left for a paltry personal smart, which lasts a second and is gone.

‘What are you doing there ?’ asked the frowning Viceroy.

‘Deed it’s a Croppy being flogged till he tells the truth, as is the rule,’ returned the sheriff confidentially, with grins. He knew not the bluff speaker, but respected the golden coach.

‘Learn then, in time, lest your own bones suffer for it,’ retorted Lord Cornwallis, ‘that I am his Majesty’s new representative. That my first order on arriving in your capital shall be to put down corporal punishment in any form whatever, unless sanctioned and signed for by me.’

The sheriff knew not what to make of it. This the new Viceroy, and these his orders ? He merely bowed and smirked, taking his cue from my Lord Clare.

A very old man in a long frieze coat, seeming to

read some sort of unusual sympathy in the flushed weather-beaten face of the last speaker, advanced to the carriage-window with a grotesque salute.

‘What can we do for you, my man?’ quoth the bluff soldier, in the hope of some answering quip which should warm away the chill which rested on his heart.

‘Plaze, yer honour!’ quavered the aged man, with a vacant smile of senility, ‘sure I’d loike, if it moight be, for my two lads foreninst the barriks there, as are sufferin’, to be hanged at onst! And, av ye plaze, might I go up too? Wid the blessing of God, I’d loike to shake a fut wid my boys!’

Lord Cornwallis pulled up the window with a jerk; and Lord Clare thought the omen not quite so good which marked the arrival of the new Viceroy.



CHAPTER II.

MR. CASSIDY IS IN DOUBT.



ORD CLARE'S previsions were justified in the first instance. The new Viceroy was obliged to refrain from positive interference for a time, in order that he might study the chaos and consider his future course. News of the affair of Vinegar Hill reached him on the second day after his arrival, and he thanked Heaven in that he was spared any participation in the maltreatment of the south. But the first week in August brought unexpected news, which compelled his excellency to look about him with promptitude. The French—bugaboo that had given his predecessor sleepless nights, only to prove afterwards the most vulgar of post-cœnal nightmares—were actually present in the flesh at last. An army had landed on the north-western coast; so the news ran which had flitted round the sea-

board in a circle of flame. A veritable army had landed at Killala under false colours, flying a mendacious Union Jack: veterans to the number of twelve hundred, who had fought in Italy under Napoleon.

These at least were worthy foes whose presence set his martial blood tingling. The hero of Vinegar Hill was despatched with all speed to the north-west, while the Viceroy assembled his forces to follow him. Three frigates only, bearing twelve hundred veterans! A handful. Was this the *avant-garde* of the invading army? Where was the rest of the fleet? Scattered as usual by wind, or delayed by some accidental circumstance? General Lake sent intelligence to his chief that this handful really composed the entire force, which was commanded by one Humbert, who had come on a fool's errand, without money or provisions, trusting to Tone's assurance that the countryfolk would rally round him so soon as he unfurled the tricolour. 'He would make short work of the adventurers,' he wrote, 'with the help of the "Ancient Britons" and the "Foxhunters."' It would hardly be necessary for his excellency to appear in person, for the brush would be over before he could arrive.'

The French met the royalists at Castlebar, where the latter were disgracefully defeated. Humbert, delighted by his easy victory, occupied the town during eight days, astonishing the people by a

courtesy to which they were little accustomed. So long as he commanded there no house-burnings were heard of; no ravishing of maidens, or pillaging of household goods. The peasantry poured into his camp, but they were worse than of no service to him—a half-savage horde of idle lookers-on, who howled and danced and quarrelled. The respectable portion of the community held aloof, for Protestants could have no sympathy with a French invader, while the higher class of Catholics looked askance at Free-thinkers who had once been in the bosom of their Church. Moreover, the horrors of Wexford were yet ringing in their ears—horrors concerning which there could be no doubt, for the Foxhunters, smeared with fraternal gore, were in their midst, who were by no means inclined to put their firebrand under a bushel. Nor was it long ere they gave a taste of their quality. They bade the fisherfolk upon the coasts to declare for one side or the other at once, and terrified the harmless people so that many tried to seek refuge in the caverns which, as at Ennishowen, burrow under the western cliffs. Many scores were drowned in the attempt, their bodies washed up upon the rocks. It was not possible (no reinforcements arriving from France) that Humbert could maintain his position at Castlebar. Perceiving his peril, he made an effort to move northward, under the impression that if he could succeed in avoiding

a decisive action, Tone would soon come with succour.

The forces of General Lake dogged his steps, amusing themselves with the native hordes who hung upon their skirts; and if ever blood atoned for treason, then were those western counties washed white as wool. Sword and halter were used with unsparing hand. An order went forth that any man in a frieze coat might be sabred, without questions asked. A certain noble colonel's humour was so broad that for a second time he was publicly rebuked; on this occasion by Colonel Campbell—whose nephew became afterwards Lord Clyde.

Humbert and his men surrendered very shortly, and, cursing the people they had come to save, were marched to Dublin as prisoners of war. So ended the third French folly.

Now hie we to Donegal with Cassidy, who, after the arrival of the new Viceroy, saw more distinctly than ever how advisable would be a short absence. Whilst artfully pretending that he could not keep a secret, or conceal an emotion, or resist temptation, Mr. Cassidy was, as you possibly have by this time discovered, a far-sighted, cold-hearted schemer. A hypocrite is not necessarily one who conceals vice behind a semblance of virtue. He belonged to a branch of the same stem who makes a vice which he has no objection to show a stalking-horse to cover a darker and more profitable vice which it is essen-

tial he should hide. It was clear to him, after a very few hours' experience of the new-comer, that my Lords Clare and Cornwallis did not agree. There would be a tussle for power, during which the smaller fry would be wise to remain quiescent. Lord Cornwallis, whose hands were full in other ways, showed no signs of desiring to interfere in the matter of the patriots ; could not, indeed, do so without a dangerous stretch of prerogative, for they were in the grip of the law, or rather of the antic creature who for the nonce assumed the name ; but he made no secret of his contempt of the Lords and Commons, and his unspeakable abhorrence of the behaviour of the yeomanry. More than this he dared not do as yet, for it was evidently not his policy to quarrel with the ascendancy party ; so he shut his eyes to the gymnastics in the Riding-school, and popped his august head under the bedclothes with a groan, when the screams of the victims in the Exchange hard by penetrated to his chamber in the Castle. His path was thick with flints. He complained bitterly of his position in letters to an old brother-in-arms. 'The characteristics of society here,' he wrote, 'are cruelty, intemperance, and profligacy. There is no trick too mean or too impudent for an Irish politician ; no deed too wicked for an Irish soldier. These last are ferocious in the extreme, when poor creatures armed or unarmed come into their power. Murder is their favourite pastime.

The conversation of all the principal persons in the country tends to encourage this system of blood, and the talk even at my own table, where you will suppose I do all I can to prevent it, turns on hanging, shooting, burning, etc. ; and if a priest has been put to death, the greatest joy is expressed by the whole company. So much for Ireland and my wretched situation.*

In their exuberant loyalty the Lords and Commons made a solemn procession to do homage before a statue of that noble character, George I., which was set up in Dawson Street. Their chancellor strutted in front, followed by Mr. Speaker and Prime Sergeant. But His Excellency declined to take part in the edifying pageant—even muttered something uncomplimentary about a pack of donkeys. Lord Clare, in his anger at the soldier's want of polish, was unwise enough to threaten that he would lodge complaints on the subject. Decidedly it was prudent for those whose nests required feathering to retire into the background until the difficulty was adjusted.

Cassidy rode northward, scanning as he went the numerous signs of recent outrage. In the towns he was stopped and eagerly questioned, for coaches and mail-bags were erratic. Rumour was garrulous, and

* Marquis Cornwallis to Major-Gen. Ross, Correspondence, vol. ii. 369 *et seq.*

frequently contradicted herself. He, too, was interested in obtaining information, for the citizens of Dublin knew nothing of the northern rising, except that it had been quickly put down with very little trouble. He learnt that in the north, as in the south, the collapse had come chiefly from lack of leaders ; for preachers could not be suddenly transmuted into generals, or traders into commanders-in-chief. There had been a half-heartedness about the whole business, arising from mutual distrust. The atrocities of Wexford shocked the Northern Presbyterians, who were only told of the excesses of the Catholics. Derry, too, was jealous of Down, Antrim of both. On the other hand, the Hessian mercenaries irritated all classes—it was the armed occupation of a conquered territory by a swinish conqueror. The flame was skilfully fanned. Amnesty for political offences was vaguely spoken of, which soon merged into sanguinary denunciation, and concluded in the devotion of whole towns to fire and sword. The people knew not how to act. If Wexford was subdued, the lash would surely fall on their backs to punish them for their known detestation of the Sassanagh. It would be better, then, to rise, some argued, so as at least to gain something in exchange for inevitable punishment. And so, undisciplined and ill-led, Antrim rose and was crushed ; then Down took the field, to suffer a like fate. It was the old, sad story over again of Wex-

ford, without Father Roche or the priest of Boulavogue. The insurrection was evanescent; accompanied by much intermittent bravery on the part of the peasants, much imbecility on the part of the leaders, awful retribution on the part of the Hessians and squireens. Cassidy found everywhere the feeling which Lord Clare had worked for, and was overwhelmed with admiration at the cleverness of the chancellor. Every one was mourning for a brother or a son. A gloom of failure hung like a pall over the peasantry. The tradesmen of the towns had lost all self-confidence, and were bowed in humiliation. Their lives were so miserable that they cared no more what happened; the iron heel had crushed them both in body and soul. The few whose spirit yet flickered formed themselves into banditti, who for years continued to infest the mountains and wild tracts. How difficult are such memories to eradicate; how tenacious and how spreading are their roots! What a long array of sedatives may be required to blot out the remembrance of a crime of such portentous magnitude as this which we are contemplating!

Meanwhile the dreamland of Ennishowen knew nothing of these things. The fairy islet of Glasaitch-é seemed defended from outer evil by a spell, which gave the sleeping knights in the sea-caves no cause for waking. The seals rolled over on the blue-green waves as though the world were not full

of sorrow; the eagles soared high up in ether, dazzled by the glory of the sun. As month followed month my lady saw that her pet project was brought no nearer to realisation than in the old days of Strogue; that it was further off, indeed; for Shane had grown as coldly indifferent to his cousin as she was to him. He made no love to her, did not seem to see her; the intercourse of those whom my lady longed to see acting as lovers was as calm as that between a brother and a sister. It was exasperating.

My lady hugged her religion, which taught her that those who follow the national faith were capable of any crime. She gloated over the narrative of the horrors on Wexford Bridge; thanked God that she was not so bad as other people; affected a certain journal recently printed by a missionary who had preached Christ's doctrine—or what he took to be such—to the benighted heathen, in which was written: 'Had much sweet enjoyment to-day in reading a sermon on the justice of God in the damnation of sinners.' Her letters brought her news which by degrees changed, so it seemed, the whole tenor of her way of thinking. At least Doreen thought so as she surveyed her aunt, who appeared now to act in spasms of contradictory impulse. At one moment the world was apparently to her so black that there was nothing for it but to sit down without hope to await the welcome

end. At another moment she became feverishly restless and energetic, chafing evidently under some hidden goad which was too bitter to be endured with outward calm. Doreen watched her with increasing interest; for Time, which was changing my lady, had changed her too, by removing the apathetic dreaminess that had, upon arriving in the north, lulled the torn fibres of her disillusioned nature with the anodyne which follows disappointment. As events unfolded themselves, the two ladies changed places. My lady, so imperious and impatient of contradiction, became apathetic, but with an uncanny resignation which increased her age all at once by at least ten years. The proud foot, instead of disdaining the earth as it used to do, lost its elasticity and dragged upon the ground. The incipient look of terror for which her eyes had always been remarkable, developed into the amaze of one who has seen a ghost face to face, while the skin round them was dry and burning, and darkened to a purplish brown. For hours and hours would she sit, like one inanimate, staring at that ghost which she only could behold, turning with a nervous start if a door or window were opened suddenly. Sometimes—but that was seldom—her surcharged heart found relief in tears; not soothing dew, but water which burned new furrows down her wasted cheek. It was evident that there was some awful weight upon her mind, which was growing

heavier — was squeezing her life-blood out by drops.

Doreen set herself to wonder what this could mean. It looked like the effort of an anguished soul to fly from memory and hoodwink remorse. Yet why should the punctiliously upright dowager be possessed by so dire a visitation? The old lady (really old now, though her years were but fifty-three) kept muttering to herself when she thought she was alone; then looked fiercely up, with glaring eyes like coals, from a suspicion that she might have betrayed something. Once her niece caught her in an excess of what seemed like madness—babbling some frantic words out loud through a thick silken kerchief which she held against her mouth. It was clear that there was some secret which was bursting to come out—that was devouring her piecemeal—and that she adopted this strange way of giving vent to it. Her sufferings must indeed be terrible, Miss Wolfe thought, if that marble pride was powerless to conceal them. No human frame may bear for long such wrenching. Either the stern countess must go raving mad, or else she would certainly soon die.

One night when (sleepless herself) Doreen rose to listen at her aunt's door, she caught, amid inarticulate babble, the oft-repeated words, 'Terence—Shane!' muttered in such tones of anguish, that, shivering, she crept back to bed, warned as by chill-

ing vapour from the threshold of a secret which 'twere better not to know. Terence—Shane! Her two sons, then, were at the bottom of the mystery—the two sons who in their mother's mind stood on such different platforms. Doreen watched on, but still found no clue to the labyrinth. The countess seemed sometimes, she observed, to be much occupied with her project—that wild notion, unpractical in the beginning, which events had made even more incongruous—of uniting these cousins who had so little in common at the first, and who had now between them the gulf of the late rebellion. Then she would seem by a mental reaction to recoil from the idea, and do her best to prevent the two from meeting who, as it was, so seldom met. Perhaps the lady really had a brain affection, Miss Wolfe's mind suggested to her at times. Perhaps she, Doreen, was trying to solve a riddle to which there was no solution. All whom it concerned knew only too well that my lady disliked her second son. It was preposterous to suppose that his joining the popular party should affect his mother in this manner. It was natural that her pride should be hurt, because he flouted her known opinions and embraced the tenets of those whom she chose to consider as unworthy of consideration. But that she should be absolutely sinking under the agony of the disgrace was altogether out of the question. When the news came that, after eluding pursuit for a long while,

he had been taken, seriously wounded, and incarcerated in the provost, she showed no emotion; while her niece, who professed to hate him, was dreadfully distressed in spite of herself. The struggle which had been tearing the old lady appeared to have worn itself out. She appeared to have resigned herself at last to accept the inevitable, to be too fatigued with the fight for her intellect to be capable of a new impression. The ghost had been looked in the face—the ghost which, ever since the late lord died, had been hovering more or less near to her. She had felt his scathing breath upon her cheek; she was under the gaze of a basilisk, whose scorching fascination reduced her will to coma. Should the news come that her son was publicly hanged like a felon, with all outward tokens of ignominy, it could stir her now to no visible emotion. The coldness which in her letters surprised Lord Clare was not one of indifference, but of a despair which had ended in collapse. She disliked her son, yet it was his fate that was corroding her life away. Why was that? If Shane, the well-beloved, had been in similar plight, the wreck, so far as she was concerned, could not have been greater—nay, nor so great. Then her agony would have found vent in indignation; she would have done something wherein might be detected, through a veil, the old imperious ways of the chatelaine of Strogue. But this utter breakdown—

this abject wreck—and all about one for whom she could not pretend to care! Here was an enigma which puzzled Miss Wolfe more and more, serving to abstract her somewhat from her own private woes.

The same motive, singularly enough, had wrought the change in both the ladies—Terence, the hapless councillor, who lay now under shadow of the gallows. At the time of the discovery of the pikes, when his mother's careless words had suggested to the high-spirited damsel that her cousin had sold the cause for gold, she had had a glimmering suspicion that her heart was no longer fancy free—that it had gone forth without the asking to one whom it was now her duty to condemn. At least there was a vague whisper (thrust aside at once) within her of the fact, which had caused her to comport herself in a way which at a calmer moment her judgment would have rejected. Then, many causes coalescing into one, she had devoted herself to birds and boating, under a delusion which she strove hard to accept as truth, that because they were beyond her helping she cared no more for her illused people, or for the champions who in their weak way would have defended them. It has been shown that she sank into a condition of apathy—of mental numbness—which had about it a sort of negative enjoyment. Then came news of events in the south—garbled offensive news sent up from Letterkenny barracks—news which filled Shane's animal soul with glee,

and caused him, abandoning the ladies, to rush off on his own account to emulate the antics of his class. This intelligence struck on the maiden's heart like so many reiterated blows, and, breaking the charm, produced a queer kind of hope. Was it possible after all that Terence could have behaved so shamefully? If not, then how was the matter of the pikes to be explained? Possibly this was another mesh in the net which Judas had been weaving—the many-headed Judas—to catch the tripping feet of all the patriots. The maiden had been too hot to ask for an explanation. Had she wronged her cousin, or not? A strange bubbling of joy welled up within her at the thought that a doubt was possible; but this she repressed with guilty vehemence. It was no time for joy or hope. Then the news dribbled in of Wexford and Scullabogue—the awful crimes committed by the Catholics, without so much as a whisper of the Protestant outrages at Carlow and the Gibbet-Rath; and she longed with a wild longing to go south once more. Was it possible that these reports were true? At the worst, they must be much exaggerated. But men are only human. Drive them too hard, and they inevitably turn to beasts. It is only the purest metal which comes improved out of the crucible; and how rare that metal! If the reports were true, how the men of Wexford must have suffered! It was with a whimsical feeling of distress that she marked her

aunt's growing ill-difference with reference to these reports. Time was when my lady would have chewed the cud of Scullabogue, extracting therefrom a savoury text on which to found a discourse upon the sins of the scarlet woman, pointing innuendoes at her niece such as might quiver in her Papist soul. Doreen would rather have endured this pillory than see the old lady so undone. Nor Scullabogue, nor Carlow, nor the iniquitous Fathers Roche or Murphy, Kearnes or Clinch, could rouse her from her lethargy any more, or distract her attention from the contemplation of her ghost.

Doreen determined to write to her father about the countess, whose state really grew quite alarming : there was no use in talking to Shane about it ; he was quite too besotted. Granted that she cared little for her second son, it was astonishing (for she was not hard-hearted) that my lady should evince no desire to nurse her boy, who was lying wounded in a prison cell. Lord Clare was no doubt doing all that was kind ; yet a mother's hand on a sick pillow is likely to be even more soothing to an invalid than a lord chancellor's. But as her soul became more shrivelled she pointedly avoided even the mention of Terence's name, and showed general signs of a peevish querulousness, which was alien to her strong character. It did not seem to strike my lady that it was time to pack up and return to Strogue ; maybe she knew that her ghost would pursue her thither, and felt

callous as to where she abode or what she did, provided that there was no escape from the petrifying phantom.

Doreen had another reason for imploring her father to use his influence as to the return of the family to Dublin. The intelligence of the state-trials moved the damsel much. Her people, it was evident, were to bow under their burden in obedience to Heaven's decree. In their travail she might be of use to the patriots—still more to their distressed wives and families. She wrote, therefore, pointing out that no one could dream of conspiring now, and that, so far as she was concerned, it was idle to detain her a prisoner.

One day my lord returned from his accustomed cruise down Lough Swilly in huge delight. The circle of flame, which had swept past this portion of the coast as well as others, had informed the dwellers in Ennis-howen that peril threatened somewhere. Then had come suspense and vague rumours of the French nightmare, which people put from them at once as idle chatterings of a danger that was over. My lord had sailed from tower to tower—those stalwart towers whose creation he had himself superintended—but no keeper could tell him more than that he had lit his bonfire upon seeing one blazing to westward, and that his own warning had been answered by a similar blaze to eastward. The soldier-sprigs of Letterkenny even could say nothing positive. It was reported

that the French had come at last, they said ; but at this eleventh hour the notion was absurd. Doreen's heart had leaped within her. The French ! Was Theobald with them ? She condescended to coax and wheedle Shane, and put forth all her blandishments to obtain more positive information. Suspense was racking her. She even offered to go with him on his yacht, and be civil to those horrible bumpkins in uniform, if he would sail forthwith to Letterkenny and discover something tangible. He went alone ; but wrung from her a promise that if he organised an aquatic *fête* shortly, to which he proposed to invite the aforesaid bumpkins, she would cast aside her reserve, and make herself agreeable to them.

‘ You know, Doreen,’ he said, ‘ that my lady's breaking up. She looks like a ghoul. By the Hokey, she'd frighten 'em all away ! and it's devilish dull here for a young man like me. For political reasons I've borne the penance all this weary time. But may I be well triangled if I put up with it much longer.’

Though the speech was rude, as conveying a hint to his cousin that her constant presence by no means made up to him for the vanished orgies of Cherokees and Blasters, yet did she smile her sweetest smile on him. It proved that she need never dread being tormented with his attentions ; and so she promised, and he went. He was several days absent ; then returned, as I have said, in huge

delight. The festival was organised. The squireens were much *obleeged*, and would make a point of responding to his lordship's *feevour*. It was to take place in ten days. Doreen must see to details. They would dine in the low-arched hall, and take their claret in the garden. What pleasanter than to enjoy the delicious autumn air, laden as it was with health-inspiring brine?

Doreen commanded herself sufficiently to listen to his prattle. What was my lord's *fête* to her—the odious boozing boors! She was pining for political news—was about, losing all patience, to interrupt her cousin—when, to her surprise and delight, he stopped of his own accord with a string of oaths, vowing that in this accursed hole he was forgetting his manners. He had picked up a guest at Letterkenny—one whom she used to like. He jerked his thumb over his shoulder towards the yacht. She looked, and beheld—Cassidy—the old friend and true, who was as hearty and as jolly as ever, with his roguish twinkle and double-chin, smiling and waving salutations to her! Cassidy, who had promised once to be a friend—on that day after his silly declaration by the kennels! Cassidy, escaped by some kindly turn of fate from the ills which had fallen on the rest! He would know everything, could tell her private details of persons whose names she dared scarce mention to herself.

This was a delightful surprise. Dropping her

ordinary coldness, she advanced quickly to him with flushed cheek and both hands extended. He read in her face that she was genuinely glad to see him, and thanked his stars that he had bethought himself of trying once again. She had been coy—needed persistent wooing—was, like all women, a born coquette. He held both her trembling little brown hands in his, and would have kissed her if grinning Shane had not been looking on. She liked him. There could be no doubt of it. The sweet lovely minx—brown as a berry—all the lovelier and the browner for long exposure to the sun and blustering blast and wholesome air. She had betrayed herself, the demure siren! The Castle and its people might go to the devil now. He need not trouble to feather his nest. She evidently loved him enough to take him as he was, and had gold enough for both. He mentally resolved to choose the first opportunity to put the tender question in due form. Pretty, stately creature! What a charm there was in the toss of her shapely head, the tawny depths of her solemn eyes!

Her first question somewhat disconcerted the amorous giant.

‘How is Terence?’ she asked, recovering her usual calm.

He glanced suspiciously down, but there was no tremulousness about the serene face such as his own coming had provoked. It was natural to ask

after a cousin who was once a playfellow, and was now on the threshold of an ignominious death.

‘‘Deed, and he’s bad, acushla!’ he returned bluntly; then, with an affectionate hand-squeeze, followed beckoning Shane to pay his respects to my lady.

With heartfelt thankfulness the girl, who went with them, listened to Shane’s budget of gossip, as he tumbled it out, a confused medley, for his mother’s benefit. This French expedition was but the wild freak of an adventurer unwisely brave. He and all his men—Frenchmen all—were gone in chains to Dubiin, a mirth-provoking spectacle for the good townspeople, who were getting weary of badgered Croppies. The boys at Letterkenny were coming to his little *fête*—he was to send the yacht and a whole fleet of boats for them. It would be rare fun!

By-the-bye, Sir Borlase Warren and some English ships of war were cruising somewhere close by—their mission to prevent another French band from landing, if another leader should be found as foolhardy as this Humbert. That was not likely. Sir Borlase would have his cruise for nothing. The laws of hospitality demanded that he should be entertained. Shane had left a message at the tower on Fanad Head to the effect that Lord Glandore would be glad to be civil to Sir Borlase. Maybe he and his officers would grace the prospec-

tive *fête*. With this Shane descended to the cellar, to look out some bottles of prime claret for the delectation of Cassidy. Being but a half-mounted, my lord had consistently treated that personage at Strogue with indulgent patronage mingled with hauteur ; but now he was so tired of getting drunk alone, or with the rough skipper of his yacht, that he condescended to kill a fatted calf for the behoof of the new arrival.

So the third French expedition had gone off like a damp squib ! Doreen was in nowise sorry for the prisoners. Faithless as the French had been, great in promises which were never fulfilled, it served them right to be punished for their folly. But she was deeply thankful that Tone was not among them. It rather surprised her, till she reflected that her young hero was wise beyond his years, and far-sighted too. He saw, no doubt, as she did, that the moment was come and gone ; that there was nothing for it but endurance now. He was galloping in his general's uniform on the banks of the Rhine, or perchance was one of Buonaparte's staff in Egypt or elsewhere. He had slaved with the power of a young Samson for motherland ; but treachery had done her work—Samson was shorn. He could do no more. Like her, he could only wait. It was a mercy that his life was spared.

Cassidy's presence was certainly a relief to all, by introducing a new element of interest into a house-

hold devoured by ennui. He was so gay and willing. It was a pleasure to hear his rich voice carolling one of the dreamy songs of Ireland, as he caught fish for breakfast over the garden parapet. Even my lady had a wintry smile for him. Shane dragged him out with glee to look at the Martello towers, to shoot a seal, to have a blaze at the puffins about Malin Head. The cheery, pleasant creature! Sir Borlase and his fleet sailed by. The admiral's boat, manned by its natty crew in dazzling white garments, shot to the staircase hewn from the living rock, to scrape acquaintance with the hermits of Glas-aitch-é. He thought he had never seen so singular a household. The scared aristocratic-looking lady, with snowy locks and deep furrows of sorrow ploughed on her faded cheeks—each line in the fretwork of whose brow told of carking care, each rustle of whose silken robe spoke of overweening pride; the beautiful tall gipsy, with pride as great as hers, which was tempered by a serene sadness that became her beauty well. And dwelling with this pair of cold, haughty women, two men of such a different stamp! The young lord, a reckless devil evidently, and fierce, despite his somewhat effeminate figure and tiny hands; given, too, to the modish vice, as was evidenced by the coarsening of his fine features. And then, culminating surprise, the great jolly giant—type of a rollicking Pat—vulgar and humorous; who somehow was of

much commoner clay than his three companions, who yet treated him with indulgent friendliness. What a strange life this quartet must be leading! the admiral mused, as he went upon his way. They would repay careful study. He had no particular orders as to his cruise, except that he was to watch the northern coast. He would inspect the inlets of Lough Foyle, and then come back again. Why were they leading this odd hermit life? Decidedly it would be worth while to examine them more closely. The maiden and the giant went about together a good deal, he remarked, in two frail coracles, side by side—paddling among banks of heavy seaweed, landing on the strand to visit cottagers, skirting the beetling cliff in search of rare ferns and lichens. Could they be about to make a match of it? Some of the most happy couples are composed of the most conflicting elements. Yet it did seem a pity for a refined girl like this to unite herself to a common farmer-fellow!

My lady, too, remarked the apparent flirtation, and frowned. 'What's bred in the bone will come out,' she muttered, as, sitting on the marble seat among the straggling flowers, she basked in the sun. 'It's the blood of her mother. She has a predilection for common people. That is why she went on so shamefully at Strogue, consorting with the sons of old Doctor Emmett, who, in his way,

was a good man, in preference to cousin Shane !' Then, remembering the behaviour of her second son, she contemplated her ghost again. 'That he should come to a shameful end,' she groaned, wringing her hands together. 'Is this a direct judgment on me? Did my husband foresee this when he spoke upon his death-bed? Had I acted as I ought, would Terence have been saved?'

Doreen was so accustomed to be led by her wayward will that it did not strike her that she was doing anything peculiar in going thus about with Cassidy. She occupied her boat, he his; sure, nothing could be more proper. She had always looked upon him as on a Newfoundland dog, whose rough gambols are amusing, and courted his society now to hear details of her Dublin friends without interruption from her aunt. She learned much that was true and much that was false. With grief she listened to the weary tale of treachery, marvelling with Cassidy as to who the traitor was. She burned with indignation at the conduct of the executive, observing that there is an unwritten law in accordance with which the ignorant are to be protected from themselves; not coaxed to crime and then murdered for it. For some reason of his own, the giant avoided the mention of Terence; and Doreen respected his delicacy, for she thought that perchance he had ill things to tell of him, and she

shrank from hearing them ; clinging rather to her present state of doubt.

One day as they drifted on the glassy sea—the one pensive, with her chin upon her hands, the other distracted by his increasing passion—Cassidy remarked that her coracle was leaking, that a tiny rift had been cut in the side by a jagged stone, and that the water was lapping in unawares. He swore there was peril—lost his head in an absurd manner—while she smiled. Why did she not choose to come out with him in a bigger boat ? These frail cockle-shells were ridiculous ! What greater delight could there be for him than to row so precious a burthen ?

‘I prefer my liberty,’ was her demure reply, as she measured her distance to the islet, and then the incoming water. ‘If I put my strength into it I shall get safely home, so don’t excite yourself.’

With rare skill she plied the light oars, baring her shapely arms and stretching them to their full length, and arrived at the staircase-foot out of breath, but safe, ere the coracle had time to fill.

‘There !’ she said in smiling triumph, as she stood on the slippery step, her ripe lips half opened, her bosom heaving. ‘Am I not quite fit for the rôle of an old maid ? Can I not look after myself without a protector ?’

Cassidy, with emotion, was as breathless as she. ‘Like the poor Irish boys,’ he blurted out, ‘you

should be protected against yourself. When you are my wife you shan't play such pranks !'

Doreen, who was moving up the steps, turned swiftly and looked down at him. There was pained wonder in her tawny eyes—scornful anger in the knitted arches of her brow.

'Mr. Cassidy !' she said, panting. 'Oh, I'm so sorry ! Is this my fault ? I thought it was quite understood that your former nonsense was mere passing fancy. Never, never speak like that again, or I must tell my aunt, who will turn you out of doors. Indeed, after this, I'm very, very sorry, but the sooner you go away the better !'

Her face was crimson. Gathering up her skirts, and thereby displaying a silver buckled brogue and ribbed woollen stocking, she tripped lightly up the flight and was gone, leaving her forlorn admirer to see to the boats alone.

Was it for good or ill that she went away so hurriedly ? Would it have been better for her to have beheld the true man without his mask ? She could scarcely be more pained and astonished than she was already. She was not intentionally a coquette. The manner of her bringing up and the atmosphere of melancholy by which she was enwrapped, caused her to think it possible to be on platonic terms with men upon a purely brotherly basis. Neither Tone nor the Emmetts had dreamed of making love to her. She did not consider her

own beauty and the inflammable nature of the Hibernian heart—that is, when it is not fully engrossed already by national grievances. Perhaps she would look on Cassidy as he really was ere long—most probably indeed—for as he bent down to tie the boats, the water reflected a villainous expression of countenance, whilst he swore under his breath to be revenged for having been tricked and fooled by a born jilt.



CHAPTER III.

SHANE'S LITTLE PARTY.



WHEN she observed a marked coolness 'twixt Doreen and the guest, my lady frowned more and more. *Amantium irce!* This was worse and worse. Was this boor to take the damsel from under Shane's nose? It occurred to her that it was time to shake off her lethargy. Ghost or no ghost, it would not do for this 'half-mounted gentleman' to carry off the prize after which she had stooped for years to scheme herself, for reasons of her own. As it seemed slipping from her fingers, it appeared to grow in value; and the importance of the danger exorcised the ghost for the time being. Shane's interests should not be made to suffer through his mother's indifference. The list of charges against the hapless dowager was full enough without that. So soon as the *fête* to the squireens was over, she

would return to Strogue. Why did she ever leave it to come to this accursed spot? She became once more the imperial countess—roused herself—went hither and thither to see that the family name was not dishonoured by the preparations for hospitality—suggested changes for the better—had the garden roofed in with curtains, and tables spread there in cool shadow. It would be nice, she affirmed, for the gentlemen to enjoy the unrivalled panorama of the Donegal mountains whilst sipping the equally unrivalled claret of their host.

Doreen, who on reflection was grievously annoyed at the folly of her large admirer, was taken by surprise when she beheld this new phase in her aunt's demeanour. She was a kaleidoscope, but certainly not mad. No judge on the bench was more sane than she. The corroding gloom was still there, but lightened; no longer engrossing its victim as it had done. Power had been given by some mysterious agency to shake off the weight. Who might solve the riddle? Was the cause of her agony actually gone? It could not be remorse, then. The gloom which remained was exhaustion after pain. Doreen gave it up, and resigned herself to the consideration of tarts and puddings for the benefit of chawbacons.

The grand day came, and with it the squireens, who were turned to stone by the aspect of my lady, as by a gorgon's head. Despite the chill which

hangs over the sea at sunrise, their warm hands became more and more clammy in Medusa's awful presence. She wore a stiff brocade cut in an obsolete fashion, with a broad sash and full white fichu loosely knotted behind. As a gorgon she was a success. Never in the palmy days of Dublin Castle had she struck terror into the bosoms of *débutantes* as she did now into the innermost souls of these raw youths. They mopped their brows, rubbed their moist hand-palms on their small clothes of kerseymere, tugged at their tight vests, felt nervously whether their pigtails were hanging straight over the tall coat-collars which sawed their ears, stumbled over their swords, demeaned themselves after the manner of awkward youth when in a paroxysm of timidity. She curtsied like Queen Elizabeth, with high nose exalted, and they shrank back in a wave affrighted; only to ebb again in renewed fear, having well-nigh knocked down the lovely Miss Wolfe who was making a dignified entrance by another door. Those two haughty women together in one room were quite too much for them. With relief they sat down to a sort of improvised breakfast, for the shadow of tables would conceal their shoes, the country make of which had already been remarked by the younger lady's eagle eye. Conscience makes fools of us. Doreen cared not about their shoes, nor saw them. She merely thought the young men a set of oafs, and was displeased, in that

they should have arrived too early. By prearranged programme they were to be taken to inspect the towers; then to view the English fleet, by kind permission of Sir Borlase; then they were to return to dinner, to get as intoxicated as if they were 'gentlemen to the backbone,' sleep off their orgy, and return in the morning to Letterkenny barracks. An excellent programme, no doubt, wherewith to while away an autumn holiday—but a still better one had been prepared for them by destiny.

While the party was at breakfast, the stillness became broken by an odd concussion in the air. A dull series of unequal thuds a long way off, which reverberated on the waves, that seemed to bear them onward in muffled throbs. What could cause the strange sensation which acted on the nerves with such irritating effect? It was not thunder. Nobody present had ever been in battle, or they would have recognised the singular sound, which is indescribable, and which, having once been heard, may never be forgotten. It was part of the programme that they should be shown a fleet. Fortune was lavish, and decided to show them two. The English fleet was in the offing; *so was the French*. At dawn, Sir Borlase (whose squadron amounted to nine vessels) had been no little taken aback by the appearance of four ships hurrying through the mist. On descrying the glint of his white sails these ships tacked and made off, confessing by the

movement, though they showed no colours, that they represented an enemy. He instantly gave orders to stow away the holiday gear and clear for action—despatching a message to my Lord Glاندore, to announce that he was gone away on business, but that he might return in time for dinner, and bring some extra guests with him.

The French ! How silly was the Grande Nation ! When energy and promptitude might have lost Ireland to England, they hung about and dawdled and did nothing. When the critical time was passed, they seemed suddenly to have awakened and to be resolved to rush wilfully by dribblets into the open jaws of death. When Humbert landed a few days before, he had at least the advantage of surprise. Warned by his bit of lunacy, English squadrons were despatched all round the seaboard to guard the coast ; and yet a handful of adventurers could still be found to attempt to seize a country that wanted them no more !

When the admiral's message came, Cassidy glanced sideways at Doreen. She turned pale, and, to the relief of the squireens, retired indoors.

The opening of Lough Swilly is one of the most perilous points for seamen who are ignorant of its peculiarities, even on an iron-bound coast which everywhere is dangerous. At ebb there are long stretches of low water, broken here and there into surf by banks of underlying rock. When the French ships strove to

flee before Sir Borlase (there were only four—the rest of the expedition being, as usual, nowhere), the French commander recognised the fact that, being caught in a trap, he must stand at bay with one to ensure the escape of the other three. He had one big and heavy man-of-war which floundered—badly piloted—like an unwieldy whale, nearer and nearer to the cliff. The English admiral was bearing down on him. There was no time to tranship men—to leave the monster to its fate—empty—an idle prey. With intrepid courage he signalled his other ships to retreat through shallow water, resolved alone to honour his country's flag, which was now unfurled, by a desperate but hopeless defence.

Sir Borlase despatched a razee and a frigate after the fugitives. They flitted into distance, and were seen no more. Then, the black monster having been surrounded by five smaller foes, one of the most obstinate engagements began that was ever fought upon the ocean. The occupants of the island could mark all that passed, for the returning tide drifted the helpless hulk closer and more close inland, and they, as it were, occupied a front place at the entrance of the lough wherefrom to view the spectacle. It was most exciting. Even my lady's dulled eyes sparkled as they had not done for years. Shane—almost delirious—the cicatrice on his forehead standing forth like a stain—whooped and hallooed and clapped his hands and danced

bandangoes on the parapet, and would have tumbled headlong over the garden wall into the sea, if the giant had not held his skirts. Who should be a better judge of such matters than the King of Cherokees? The squireens forgot their nervousness, became oblivious of country shoes, of ill-made pigtails, and red ears and knuckles, whooping and hallooing like a pack of hounds, in echo to the whooping of their host. Some (but these were very forward) even clutched Medusa's dress—pinched Queen Bess's arm—in their eagerness that the white-haired lady should not lose a point in the struggle.

For six hours the doomed monster laboured, heaving on the shallow waves, drifting within a stone's throw of Malin Head. Figures could be detected through the smoke, scurrying hither and thither in blue uniforms, with gestures of command or encouragement. Two, more busy than the rest, were on the poop, rushing forward—aft—conspicuous in the front of peril for gold-laced sleeves, huge hats and feathers, loose hair after the French mode. Masts and rigging crashed and crumbled—the ponderous hull winced and swayed with repeated shocks, while the surge lapped creamy round its prow. The roar of artillery now was deafening.

‘If they don't take care,’ Shane screamed, as though his warning could be heard, ‘that blunder-

ing hull will jam the little vessels against the rocks !'

With a desperate energy which compelled the sympathy even of the squireens, the doomed ship returned fire for fire, though her sails and cordage clung about her in ribbons ; though her shattered ribs yawned at each new stroke ; though her scuppers flowed with blood ; though her decks were piled with corpses. As the smoke swirled away in eddies, the two in hats and plumes could still be seen exposing themselves recklessly, ordering up hammocks and spare sails to stuff into widening gaps. The cannonade of Sir Borlase rang among the sea-caves, bringing thence whirring troops of bats, which dashed in their terror in the faces of the combatants, then dropped dazed into the sucking swell. The frightened fisher-folk looked on furtively at first from holes and clefts, then fled inland, leaving their precious nets and boats as a spoil for the spoiler. The death-struggle of the monster was painful to look upon, as it swung heavily and shivered whilst blow succeeded blow. It was a gallant monster, for the tattered tricolour still dangled over the gap where once the rudder was—a valiant monster ! Enemy though he might be who was receiving a final battering, few could look without pity on his death-throes—for he was dying game.

Gurgling foam-whipped water began to pour into

the hold of the big ship, which now lay so close at hand that her name was visible in florid carving on her poop—*Hoche*. The name of Tone's friend and Buonaparte's rival, who had died but a few months ago, of consumption, on the Rhine. She was a dismantled wreck—nothing but a dark battered hull. Her batteries were dumb; dismantled. The tattered tricolour went down, as a signal that she struck. The banging of Sir Borlase ceased. The sudden stillness, after so long-drawn a hubbub, was painful to the ear. The squireens clasped each other's hands and embraced in their excitement, whilst Shane drew forth his jewelled timepiece.

‘By the Hokey! but it's a glorious sight!’ he gasped, flapping his face with a dainty handkerchief; for a spectacle such as this touched the finest chord in his nature. ‘Six hours, as I live; and it seems scarce six minutes. The sun is high in the heavens, though you can't see him for the smoke, save as a saffron disk. They are fine fellows, mounseers though they be; we'll give them a hearty cheer when Sir Borlase brings them to dinner. On my honour, I half wish they had conquered!’

Doreen, at the commencement of the action, had withdrawn alone to the watch-tower where the fire-bucket stood, and remained there clutching it with a heavy dread. What a relief it had been to her mind to think that the French had given up all thoughts of invasion! Something told her that

that big rolling hulk, caught in shallow water as an unwieldy fish may be, was the flagship. Who might there be on board? When the roaring ended and silence supervened, she was still at her post of vantage, concealed from the sight of the excited mob below by the rolling masses of vapour, which hung like winding-sheets upon the sea. She stood there as in a trance—motionless in the body, though her mind worked with exceeding swiftness—till, after a lapse of time, the sound of measured oars made itself audible, approaching gradually, with regular plodding rhythm; and then a row of boats, headed by the admiral's, loomed at the stone staircase-foot. She woke with a shudder to a Babel of shouts and laughter, and slowly descended from her eyrie, trembling with mortal apprehension.

‘Mounseers, every man Jack!’ Sir Borlase was saying, cheerily.

‘Thank God!’ was the fervent echo in Doreen’s bosom.

‘The French-Irish boys are conspicuous for their absence when it comes to blows for Ireland,’ went on the admiral. ‘Quite right, too; for we couldn’t treat ’em as prisoners of war, you know. There’s not a man among my prisoners, thank the Lord, who’s not a Parleyvoo.’

Doreen appeared in the small battlemented garden, but stood aside, out of respect to the vanquished braves. They passed her by in their blue

full-skirted coats and voluminous neckcloths and queer cocked hats and plumes; some bleeding, some reeling like drunken men, some with heads bowed and livid faces, some with a poor assumption of jauntiness—all smirched and powder-blackened.

They passed between two scarlet hedges, along the avenue which the squireens opened for them, into the low entrance-hall, and there waited in knots. There could not be the smallest chance of escape; therefore no guard was set. Generous Sir Borlase was sorry for the men who had fought so well. This little courtesy was due to such brave soldiers. They might wander where they listed on the islet, while the British admiral was arranging what was to be done with them.

Lord Glandore busied him exceedingly; held important conferences with Sir Borlase and the commandant of the squireens. If the poor fellows were to be captured at all, it was a stroke of luck for him that they should have been taken within his jurisdiction. They should be packed off, by-and-by, in his own yacht to Rathmullen; he would go himself with the escort. The commandant at Letterkenny would send them on to Dublin; he, too, would ride thither. It would be wonderful if he did not receive an English marquissate as reward for his brilliant services. Meanwhile it behoved him to play *Grand Seigneur*. If there was one thing which could create a passing spirit of real generosity in his

shallow nature, it was the sight of personal prowess. He always loved a good duel, a good cock-fight, a successful bear-baiting. Had he not been in the habit of fighting endless duels himself for a mere bubble reputation? His own rapier was rusty now from want of use; but, please the pigs, he would start afresh next week in the metropolis, and resume his crown and sceptre as King of Cherokees. This contest on the sea had been a delightful affair; the vanquished should quaff their fill of his very best claret—aye, the very primest. As he descended to the cellar he beheld Doreen doing woman's work. She was a kind creature, though stuck-up. She had summoned the maids with linen and water. They were moving quietly among the groups, whilst she, with high-bred courtesy, was whispering gentle words of consolation.

There, in a remote corner, sat the two who had behaved so gallantly. Their fine scarlet capes and cuffs, and gold-bedizened hats, proclaimed them to be of the highest military rank. One was nursing his knee and whistling softly, as his mind wandered far away; the other was bent forward; his hands were clasped over his face; hot tears were trickling between his fingers.

‘Be of good cheer,’ the lively first one murmured; ‘we shall see *la belle France* again, no fear. We shall be ransomed by-and-by. You will again behold your wife and little ones.’

Doreen swept with stately grace to where they sat.

‘Are either of the gentlemen hurt?’ she inquired in French.

He who was bowed down looked up. She dropped the pitcher which she held, and staggered against the wall.

‘Theobald—*here!*’ she whispered.

Alas! Yes. It was Theobald Wolfe Tone—thinner, paler, with all the youth gone out of him.

‘It was not thus that I had expected to return,’ he said in French, with a sorry smile. ‘Yet what matters it? *Le temps et le malheur ont flétri mon âme!*’

Doreen speedily recovered her self-possession.

‘How culpably rash!’ she muttered. ‘There is no one that knows you in this place who would betray you; you will pass for a Frenchman. I will warn Shane, that he may not show surprise. That you should have come at last! Too late—too late!’

My lady, who was always the first to think of etiquette, suggested that the officers of high rank should occupy the reception-rooms. It was showing scant civility to leave them in the hall, like lacqueys. By-and-by, when the repast was served, they should be shown by their hostess, in person, to the places of honour.

Miss Wolfe gladly echoed her aunt’s suggestion, for she was burning to talk to Theobald, yet dared

not in this public place, under the eyes of awe-stricken oafs.

‘Mademoiselle’s goodness almost makes us thank defeat,’ observed Tone’s companion, with a Parisian bow. ‘If all the ladies in Ireland are like her, it will be a sad moment for us when we come to be exchanged. As for our melancholy friend here, he need surely not be recognised. His appearance is worthy of the uniform he wears, his accent will pass muster; he has quite acquired the *je ne sais quoi* of the Boulevard. We begged of him not to risk himself, but he would; and here he is—*que voulez-vous?*’

Yes, here he was; there was no doubt of that dreadful fact. In wrath (which the Parisian thought became her style of loveliness) she rated him in whispers for his folly, charging him with flying in the face of Providence, with being selfish and unkind.

Theobald listened, while his eyes wandered over the blue line of mountains, glittering now through rifts of driving smoke in the prismatic haze of a hot afternoon.

‘I could not help it,’ he said, with slow despondency. ‘I knew we could not succeed. The English Government was informed of our starting. It was an attempt to resuscitate a flame quenched beyond power of rekindling. Yet I felt it my duty, if the Directory sent but a corporal’s guard, to go

and die with them. The hand of the executioner shall never be laid on me. If my time has come, it has come.'

This dejection was terrible to witness. Veering round, after the way of woman, Doreen took his hand in hers, and, stroking it, nestled by his side.

The Parisian felt himself *de trop*, and, humming a gay air, turned his attention to the landscape. It was a relief to his sense of *les convenances* when a fourth person entered the drawing-room.

It was Cassidy, whose face underwent a series of rapid changes as he recognised his brother-in-law. He had ceased to be the jovial, jolly, willing Cassidy. There had been a spiteful peevishness about him for days past, which surprised Miss Wolfe no little. The milk of his good-humour had turned sour. She thought it singular that her refusal to become his wife could alter a man's nature so.

'You!' was all that the giant could find breath to say, as with fists thrust deep into his breeches-pockets and thick legs straddled wide, he stared at the apparition.

Theobald held out his hand, but he whose sister he had married did not take it. His mind was seething with new ideas. What an unexpected way had now presented itself of, at one stroke, making his fortune and revenging himself on this haughty minx !

‘You!’ he repeated again, after a pause, as though he could scarce trust his eyesight.

‘Hush!’ Doreen said; ‘we must keep the secret.’

Cassidy stared sourly at her, and laughed a short sharp laugh. She looked up at him in growing apprehension, for he appeared to her without his mask, and she could not comprehend the change.

‘Ireland lies soaked in blood,’ he said, ‘through *you*. You’ve come to look upon your work?’

Theobald started. ‘I always designed open and honest warfare,’ he murmured; ‘not brigandage and murder! The eighteen thousand victims murdered by Alva did not stifle the birth of Holland’s liberty. From every drop of my blood and that of those who lay down their lives for the holy cause there shall arise a patriot to avenge our death.’

‘Ye’re right. When ye get to Dublin ye’ll be hanged. A short shrift and a dog’s death!’ was the blunt rejoinder.

‘No, no!’ cried Doreen, her face blanching.

‘I am prepared to pay the penalty of unsuccess,’ Tone answered. ‘Washington succeeded. Kosciusko failed. I staked my all with a view to the liberation of this wretched land. I have courted Poverty. I leave my beloved wife—your poor sister, Cassidy—unprotected, my children fatherless. That’s what unmans me. After so much, it will be little further effort to sacrifice my life.’

‘It shall not be!’ Doreen cried.

Tone smiled sadly. 'From the days of Llewellyn of Wales, and Wallace of Scotland, England has never shown generosity to a fallen enemy.'

'He has come as a French general,' exclaimed Miss Wolfe with creeping fear; 'who will betray his incognito?'

'It may become my duty,' returned the giant, dryly.

The blood left the girl's face and lips. Scales fell from her eyes. Here was the Judas who had sold to the gallows one by one, with the cold crafty deliberation of a devil, the men who had trusted him—who had clasped his hand in friendship. She saw it all now. With the lucidity which comes over our minds in moments of extreme trouble, she beheld in lurid links of fire the chain complete. The discovery of the pikes in the armoury; in the potato ground of the 'Irish Slave'; the two-fold betrayal of the council of the society; the town-major's knowledge of its members, and its passwords; the taking of Terence—of Terence—*who was innocent!*

She could do nothing but writhe under the blow, twisting her fingers together in speechless helplessness.

There was such an intensity of disgust expressed in the movement, that the giant cleared his throat with a shade of embarrassment.

'Miss Doreen,' he said, 'will ye speak to me in private?'

Her white lips moved and shaped the word—
‘No.’

‘Ye’d better,’ he urged, ‘indeed ye had.’

A dead silence still. Revengeful rage disturbed his brain. Foolish woman! she could scarcely expect him to speak out, and clinch a bargain before the victim’s face.

‘Ye’ll repent it,’ he growled. ‘Would ye have a poor man fling his chances away? This fellow’s life is worth two thousand guineas and a seat in parliament. I’d give that up and welcome, if ye’d unsay the words, colleen, that ye spoke the other day!’

What a strange mixture he was of the lion and hyena. The tenderness which he strove to throw into his voice, and the leer in his eye, explained to the patriot the purport of those words. With indignation he turned on his wife’s brother.

‘Wretch!’ Theobald cried, ‘who has a hand for every man—a heart for himself alone! Would you dare ask her to sell herself for me? Sooner than that, I’d walk downstairs and tell my name myself to the English admiral.’

Doreen’s mind was overset by the discovery she had made. She felt sick and giddy, for the world was sliding from beneath her feet. She looked at one, then at the other, without clearly understanding what was said.

‘You are a common informer!’ was all she could bring forth.

Cassidy lost his temper. It is aggravating when your overtures of compromise are scornfully repulsed.

‘Have it your own way, then!’ he laughed, with a reckless snap of the finger, which the Parisian deemed ill-bred in the presence of a lady. ‘Mind, if you are hanged it will be your own fault. A man must live. Would ye have me rob the mail? Mine’s as honest a trade as any other. Sure, don’t the Lords and Commons think it mighty honourable, and my Lord Clare too; or why do they make so much of us? It’s a rebel that ye are, Theobald. Rebels are no judges of what’s honest and what’s not.’

With this half-apology for having at last decided which course of two opposite ones should guide him in the future, the giant left the room with heavy strides—to return a few minutes later as if nothing unpleasant had occurred, with a cheery warning that dinner would be ready soon.

The Parisian, who had been quite baffled in his attempt to understand the scene, gave a sigh of satisfaction. These persons, who seemed old acquaintances, had been indulging in a family quarrel and had made it up again. His knowledge of the English tongue was limited; but he did understand ‘dinner,’ and after the excitement of the morning was afflicted with inconvenient appetite.

Punctiliously polite, the countess and her son

came upstairs presently to conduct their unfortunate guests with solemn ceremony to the banquet which was spread below. Neither showed any sign of recognising Theobald. Shane, being dull of comprehension, had looked to his mother, taking his cue from her. By virtue of his uniform the stranger was a general; by virtue of this morning's fight he was unfortunate. Vanquished braves of high military rank cannot be treated with too much courtesy.

With the quieting of the excitement their fear of Medusa lowered again on the squireens. One or two of them indeed were tremblingly conscious of having seized the Gorgon's arm and shaken it. These humbly chose the lowest place at the long table which occupied the garden's length, whilst all stood up and hid their hands and shoes as host and hostess passed.

Sir Borlase was in immense spirits. He declared himself grieved to break up so pleasant a gathering, but in the gloaming his prisoners must go. His Majesty should certainly hear of my lord's exemplary conduct. He pledged the two French generals who (Commodore Bompert being slain in action) had managed the ship so intrepidly. He tried to explain himself in broken French jargon to them. Both shrugged their shoulders and smiled to the nodding of their heavy plumes, giving thereby to understand that he had the advantage in languages,

but that they considered his speech to be complimentary. 'Lar Bel Fraunce!' he kept repeating, winking his grey eye and poking their ribs with a finger, and tossing off bumper after bumper, laughing the while consumedly, as though all must perceive that the sentiment was witty, and he a model jester (an English joker, not an Irish one).

Doreen sat next to Theobald. The waning sun, creeping in blotches through the improvised awning, touched her neck with gold, showing that warm blood circulated under the rich skin. But for this homage of the sun the squireens might have taken her for a victim of Medusa, so frozen was her manner. She was like one magnetised, who, her power of volition being gone, is obeying the dictates of a foreign power. Meats were brought to her; she tasted them. Claret was poured into her goblet. As through a film she saw the weather-beaten visage of Sir Borlase moping at her. With mechanical movement she mowed at him in return.

'Your pretty daughter's going to faint,' whispered the admiral to the dowager. 'Such sights as I provided for you this morning are all very well for males; but females—except Spaniards and low-class Frenchwomen—don't care about such things. She supervised the dressing of the wounds—Heaven bless her! 'Twas a strain on a delicate nature. She looks ill and overwrought.'

The countess remarked curtly that Sir Borlase was very good, without condescending to explain that the girl was not her daughter. She knew well the cause of the poor maiden's anguish, and felt both for him and her. The constant contemplation of late of her own private spectre had softened her. Terence on a gallows, who, but for circumstances over which his mother *had* control, might have ended so differently, was burned on her brain as a scathing reproach for ever. Theobald, whom she was used to contemplate as a crack-brained enthusiast, assumed a new interest in her eyes. There was about him a deep-seated hopelessness which is a gruesome sight in a man of thirty-six, and the contemplation of it struck a chord of sympathy in her. The case of Terence she shrank from considering at all. But this young man whose existence was no reproach: she might feel pity for him without stabbing her own soul with red-hot daggers by the impulse.

Things were going as smoothly as could be expected. Shane's little party had developed into a banquet which would become historical. Her first-born would receive honours from the King which should counterbalance the disgrace wherewith the second seemed destined to endow his family. The French prisoners of war would be exchanged in time, returning to the bosoms of their distracted loves unhurt. There was nothing really, my lady

decided in her mind, to make her niece break down, who was wont to be so unduly self-reliant. She looked like a corpse. My lady, who formerly was discomfited in hand-to-hand encounters, began to wonder whether she might conquer after all, and bring about the match for which she yearned.

At the other end of the long table Cassidy kept the company in a roar. Now that he shilly-shallied no longer, his native spirits had come back to him. His jests were racy, of the soil, and coarse—just such as could be appreciated by squireens who were far enough removed from the grandees to give free rein to their hilarity. They voted him the funniest dog; threw themselves forward in a ‘Haw-haw!’ and flung themselves back with a ‘Hee-hee!’ slapped their kerseymere shorts; wagged their heads, and giggled, without any tremor now as to the sit of pigtails over high collars. Would the radiant boy come and stop at Letterkenny? He should have the run of the barracks; should be free to go peasant-baiting whensoever he listed. Horses should become his without regard to whom they belonged. His life should be one round of jollity and junketing, if he only would come and sit down at Letterkenny.

‘Ah, now, lads, be asy!’ he cried, betwixt two sallies. ‘Do yez think the likes o’ me can stop up here? It’s Dublin that’s crying for me this blessed minute, and won’t be comforted. To Dublin I return to-morrow. Good luck to yez for kind

wishes, though. By my sowl, and if there isn't a friend up yonder on whom I've not clapped eyes this long time !'

The repast was over. The countess was sweeping the crumbs out of her lap preparatory to leaving the gentlemen to the superior attractions of the bottle, when she perceived Cassidy, glass in hand, making his way along to the upper end where she sat enthroned. Doreen perceived him too, and losing all self-control, dropped her head upon the table with a moan.

'Mr. Wolfe Tone, I think ?' Cassidy shouted out in his big voice. 'Bedad, ye're welcome home! It's long since we met.'

The shade of Banquo broke up with no greater quickness the feast of King Macbeth than did this guileless little speech the party of Lord Glandore. The squireens rose to their feet with one accord; craned out their necks, with jaws dropped and eyes gogoling.

Hesitating but for a second, Theobald threw down his cards.

'My name is Theobald Wolfe Tone!' he admitted calmly, and stood waiting for what would follow.

'What a pity!' sighed the English admiral; then, holding forth his hand, 'Ignorance is bliss sometimes,' he said, scowling at the importunate giant. 'Ye're a brave young man. I won't say what I think of *him*. I can't help it—can I?'

But Cassidy, having assumed his *rôle*, was not to be so easily scowled down. 'I've done my duty to his Majesty,' he said, very loud; 'and I call on you, Sir Borlase Warren, to report the fact that I denounced that traitor!'

The squireens twittered like scarlet birds. A vanquished foreign brave was one thing, a proscribed rebel—the very head and front of the Directory's offending—quite another. Their temporary gentleness was past; their native savagery bloomed forth again.

'Bind him!' one bawled, 'lest he thry to drown himself, and rob good Mr. Cassidy of the reward.'

'When we get him to Letterkenny,' howled another, 'we'll put irons on him before he starts south. Ah! the spalpeen! the rogue! the beast! the pig!'

A chorus of expletives poured forth. Even the presence of Medusa was forgotten.

One fetched a rope and bound it roughly round his limbs. With a burst of indignation he turned for protection to the English admiral. 'I wear the uniform of the Great Republic. Let it not be disgraced!' he pleaded.

'I can't help it, poor lad!' returned Sir Borlase, with disgust. 'If you're Wolfe Tone, ye're a subject of Britain, in arms against the King, and will surely suffer as a traitor. As for these ruffians, I

am powerless. 'They, and such as they, have long ago shamed their country and their cloth.'

'Then their bonds,' Theobald answered calmly, as he took off his coat, 'shall never degrade the insignia of the free nation I have served.'

Bound hand and foot, he was conveyed to the cabin of the yacht and placed under lock and key. Sir Borlase took no pains to disguise his opinion of the squireens. Bidding farewell to the countess, he retired abruptly with his suite, while the commandant of Letterkenny busied himself with the bestowal of the prisoners. My Lord Glandore, feeling like second fiddle, bethought him that the beacon had not been lighted whose mission was to speed to Dublin news of a French invasion, just as, two hundred years before, the lighting of tar-barrels had signalled the coming of the Armada. He remedied the omission without delay.

The fleet of boats passed down Lough Swilly without danger, though clouds obscured the moon and stars—for the circle of fire was complete, cutting out the dark skyline of each crag, marking the position of each tower with a special wave of light. The chain was as complete (turning the sky to crimson) as the chain of the giant's treachery. As she looked out on it from her window, Doreen pressed feverish fingers to her burning head; then packed her clothes together in hot haste. At cock-crow the family was to start for the capital. She

felt that, once there, she could do something—she knew not what. Terence and Tone could not both be sacrificed. Was ever human wickedness so base as that of this false friend ?

Decidedly Mr. Cassidy was master of the situation.



CHAPTER IV.

THE SHAMBLES.



WHEN it became known in Dublin that the apostle of Irish Liberty had come and was taken, the gloom which saddened the city was yet further deepened. The citizens went about their business with weary tread and pinched lips. The Terror which reigned in Paris under Jacobin rule, or in Rome under Tiberius and Nero, was not more crushing than that which rocked Erin in its iron arms towards the end of this awful year. Comparing Jacobins with Orangemen, the palm for cruelty may safely be assigned to the latter. Both factions might plead the excuse of extreme peril; but the danger of invasion by the armies of the Coalition which brought about the diabolical delirium of the Jacobins was greater than the danger to which the Irish ascendancy party was exposed: and it must be remembered too that the Jacobin

party was almost entirely composed of men taken from the lowest ranks, whereas many of the most iniquitous Irish terrorists were persons of the highest social position and fair education. The ferocity of the Jacobins, again, was in a slight degree redeemed by fanaticism. Their objects were not entirely selfish. They murdered aristocrats, not only because they hated them, but because they imagined them to stand in the way of a millennium which, according to Rousseau, was awaiting the acceptance of regenerated mankind.

Essex Bridge was fringed with heads as whilom London Bridge was; though faithful friends, when they found a chance, stole and buried them. There was a rage for trials by court-martial; a constant outcry for more victims. A mania for mimicking the Bench took possession of the military, officers of inferior rank vying with each other in an assumption of judicial functions. Whilst my Lords Carleton and Kilwarden and Messrs. Curran and Toler were plodding through a legal farce at the Sessions-House, talking through night after night to 'juries of the right sort,' the gentlemen of the yeomanry at the Exchange were making the shortest possible work of the lives under their control. Once dragged thither, conviction followed arrest as the day the night. The sun was not allowed to set upon the accused. Although prepared to close his eyes to much, the new Viceroy

found his patience and temper sorely tried; and at last, in spite of expostulation in high quarters, issued general orders condemning the conduct of the soldiery. He failed to see, he declared, how torture could be a good opiate, and was even foolish enough to suggest that banishment for a short term of years would serve all the state purposes quite as well as hanging. To this the incensed chancellor retorted by reams of jeremiads addressed to Mr. Pitt, wherein he laid stress on the new troubles which would inevitably come on all good Protestants in consequence of such deplorable backsliding from Lord Camden's able system. In his turn Lord Cornwallis pointed out the reasons for his conduct. Private enemies were daily in the most unblushing manner haled before courts-martial and consigned to Moiley. Some of the lesser gentry even went so far as openly to plunder the country houses whose owners had fled from them in fear. The behaviour of underlings was subversive of all discipline. They held back documents unless paid for honesty; Sirr admitted that what was planned by his superiors in council was made of none effect in his own office. The chancellor scored one. Lord Cornwallis found himself compelled to apologise for his leniency. He received a rap upon the knuckles from a Gr—t P—rs—n—ge in a letter which may be found in the Cornwallis correspondence, and sat down to pour out his vexa-

tions to an old brother-in-arms, as his way was when specially provoked. 'My conduct,' he wrote, 'gets me abused by both sides, being too coercive for the one, too lenient for the other ; but my conscience approves.'

The more we look into the matter, the more assured do we become that the true marplot was the Gr—t P—rs—n—ge. The first gentleman in the land set a fatal example to the Orangemen. By virtue of the royal purple he was ail-wise, despite his ignorance. He was a Protestant. Ergo, those who presumed to be anything else must be well trounced for their contumely. If the law was not rigorous enough already, its cords must be double-knotted, for the flagellation of those who dared to disagree with M—j—sty. Good King George, who hated Catholics in as insane a manner as James II. hated Protestants, was determined that so long as he clutched the sceptre, their bread should be bitter in their mouths. Lord Cornwallis was as convinced as Mr. Pitt, that the key to Irish troubles was the Penal Code. But the King flew in a rage at the bare mention of Catholic Emancipation ; so the Viceroy was obliged to bow his head with a good grace, as Mr. Pitt had done long ago ; as even the leader of the opposition had found himself compelled to do. At this juncture Marplot went further than usual ; for instead of merely insisting in general terms that the Papists must be evilly entreated, he per-

sonally meddled in the fate of the state-prisoners, with whose long-continued persecution the Viceroy had shown signs of interfering.

It had been decided, as we have seen, on the motion of Arthur Wolfe, that it would be well to negotiate with the state-prisoners. Mr. Curran had been employed as go-between, and, in accordance with his advice, the young men incarcerated at Kilmainham undertook to disclose the principles and ramifications of their society, upon certain well-defined conditions. Curran pointed out to them that the grand fiasco which is known as the 'Hurry' had removed for the present all chance of freeing Ireland, and they saw with pain that blood was being made to flow in rivers. To stem that torrent by all means available was clearly their first duty now. At first the negotiations broke down, but a few executions brought the patriots to their senses. They accordingly drew up for the benefit of Government an account of the rise, progress, and proceedings of the United Irishmen, adding an opinion that a general amnesty to all but ringleaders would do much to tranquillise the public mind. They agreed that it would be best for the ruling spirits to submit to banishment, and it was settled that a number of excepted persons should migrate to America and stop there. But now Marplot intervened. The King declined to permit traitors to cross the Atlantic, and the American minister, to please the

King, also declared that such an arrangement could not answer. The Viceroy urged that the members of the Directory had completed their portion of the compact, and that it would be disgraceful if Government did not follow suit. It could not be helped, was the brief response. The executive must crawl out of the difficulty as it best might. Mr. Curran was frantic ; Lord Clare jubilant. Tom Emmett and the others only smiled. Had they ever expected anything from England except wickedness ? She was perjured and forsworn. What could an extra crime or two signify to one who was notoriously a murderess ?

The Privy Council anxiously debated as to the neatest way out of the dilemma. Of course his Majesty must be humoured. The state-trials must run their course, but with exceeding tact of management. Mr. Pitt threatened his puppets with a beating, if they blundered. Juries of the right sort must be told not to exaggerate their functions, or Lord Moira (who was woefully independent) might stir up a new pother at St. Stephen's.

Lord Cornwallis was sulky, for he appreciated the falseness of his position ; but, having accepted the viceroyalty, he considered it his duty to retain it until at least the special object for which he had come could be accomplished. His experience and native shrewdness told him that a return to the tactics of his predecessor would be fraught with the

gravest dangers to both countries. Fate had picked him out to play the mediator ; he would do his best, even though fettered by the ignoble desires of the King. If he failed in his task, the fault would be Marplot's, not his.

After considerable wrangling, it was decided to deny that the Directory had carried out their portion of the agreement. Government was to have been let in to the secrets of the society. The paper which was drawn up was no better than a panegyric of sedition. A piece of hair-splitting this, for which the chancellor took to himself much credit. So the state-trials droned along, while the vagaries of drumhead justice kept the world awake. Several of those at Kilmainham were condemned, despite the compact, and suffered ; the rest, giving up all for lost, cared little now what was to be their destiny.

Lord Clare made a great effort on behalf of Terence, but received no encouragement, either from the Viceroy or the English premier. Both said that it would never do to make an exception in favour of one whose sins were the more scarlet on account of his position in society. He must take his trial like the rest. There was no help for it. If his friends could manipulate the jury, that was their own affair.

The chancellor looked grave, for, adept though he was in manipulating juries, he knew of a foe of Terence's who would do what he could to ruin him ;

and he was more and more mystified at the behaviour of the young man's family. Neither my lady nor Lord Glandore seemed to realise the position of affairs. Would they calmly endure while one of their noble name was being strung up as a felon? It seemed so. The young lord was a brilliant specimen of the Irish House of Peers. But surely he would not carry his slavish complaisance so far as to sacrifice his only brother to the English dragon? Lord Clare did not know what to make of it. His own influence was terribly on the wane. He went to see Terence at the provost, and found Curran there, who eyed him with undisguised impertinence, and gibed about gingerbread-nuts. But the chancellor kept his temper this time. He was no longer the all-powerful despot. A new Herod had arisen, who did not choose to recognise Joseph. He found himself thwarted by his new master at every turn. Fortune is a cruel jade! The owner of the golden coach found himself compelled to lower himself to petty plotting like ordinary men. He suggested to Curran that it would be well to push on Councillor Crosbie's trial with all speed. The little lawyer, instead of meeting him half-way, answered bluntly that the young man's wound was not healed; that the vultures were strangely impatient to devour his flesh; that, though the young patrician's life was by no means merry, he would be no party to shortening it.

Lord Clare grew impatient, and retorted with hauteur :

‘ You can have naught to do with fixing the date of trial. I was merely asking your opinion.’

And Curran, with suspicious looks, inquired the reason of his impatience. That there was a reason was evident. Would the other show his hand ? No. The other held his peace, and, sighing fretfully, departed.

Events must shape themselves as Fortune chose to dictate. He could not humiliate himself before his enemy by stating what he knew of Cassidy, and explaining the wisdom of settling the young man’s case during the absence from Dublin of that person. So Curran, unaware of pitfalls dug by jealousy, returned sadly to the cell where Terence lay tossing in his fever, almost wishing that the wound might prove mortal.

Always fond of him, by reason of his genial nature, the little advocate had been drawn very close to Terence by events. Their mutual friends were perishing around them ; Terence himself was grievously compromised. Now he was to be tried for his life. With what result ? Alas, there could be little doubt. Weak men, who while success was probable might be trusted to cling together, were anxious now to save themselves by making a clean breast of all they knew. Curran’s instinct told him that somebody or other would surely stand up to

prove the military position which his unlucky junior had arrogated to himself; to babble of his interviews on the shore near the Little House; of his arrangements for the capture of Dublin by surprise; which, but for his own timely taking, would certainly have been carried out.

Of course the advocate who had won such forensic distinction as was his would do his very best for a client who was so dear to his heart as this one; but what he could do was little after all, fighting, as he always was, against packed juries and false-witnesses. His wondrous eloquence and marvellous versatility had indeed more than once torn a doomed man from the gallows by exciting passions of such force as to conquer even the violence of fear and greed by which the juries were beset; but such miracles were not to be counted on, and it was with gloomy thoughts that the lawyer looked forward to the contest. What arguments, for instance, could have prevailed in the case of Orr, whose life was juggled away between two bumpers? After all, perhaps the proceedings of courts-martial were less bad than these legal masquerades. For in the purely military tribunal there was no doubt as to how the case would go from the beginning. Was it not better that time and breath should be economised, when cases were so notoriously prejudged? So it came about that Curran, in profound dejection, looked down upon the young man whom he

loved, and prayed that he might die of his wound.

But in this case, as in a good many others, prayers received no answer. The yeoman, when he fired at Terence to prevent his escape, broke his arm by the shot. Neglect, and the amenities of Major Sirr, produced fever and inflammation, which the dampness of the provost did not tend to improve.

Mrs. Gillin (who had been enduring purgatory on her own account at the hands of drunken soldiers' wives at free-quarters) stuck sturdily to her *protégé*, however. She hung about the antechambers of the great; worried the judges who in happier days had been her guests; importuned them for leave of free access to the invalid, till they wished they had never seen the claret she had lavished on them; and, as obstinate women generally do, carried her point. She nursed the patient in his fever with untiring devotion; amazed the gaolers almost into civility; even assailed the terrible major himself in his stronghold, taunting him with ugly words and scathing epithets, till he too wished he had never beheld the dreadful woman. She insisted that an invalid should have a cell to himself, instead of being crowded up with malodorous peasants in a low den deprived of air; arrived three times a week with good things for him in baskets, which Cerberus allowed to pass without investigation; and dragged him, whom she had sworn to watch over, by main force to convales-

cence. Once or twice he had begged that his servant Phil might be permitted to keep him company, but on this point the major was obdurate. His calves still bore the cicatrices cut on them by the farrier's knife, and the major was not one to forgive an injury. He bore in mind, too, that but for his coat of mail he would have been left dead upon the road that day. Phil, therefore, was set apart for private torment; was not even handed over to the tender mercies of a court-martial.

Mrs. Gillin, for Terence's sake, commissioned old Jug to discover news of him, who went about her business in mysterious fashion, declining to divulge what she discovered, until one day, some months after his disappearance, she told her protectress, with weird mutterings, that 'the boy was near his end.'

'How's that?' her mistress asked, frowning. 'Ye look as if ye were glad that ill should come to him. How's that?'

''Cause he's a farrier and I'm a collough, as my people have been ever since Ollam Fodlah's day. He's near his end; the curse of Crummell has lit on him. Sure, it's well whipped he's been on the triangles these many times, foreninst the Royal Exchange beyant. The boy's broke, body and sowl; but the young masther'll see him soon enough. I'm tould the two'll be thried together, for a murderous assault first on the town-meejor, who was

doing his duty, when he skelped 'em up, and then for treason afther. Weren't they always together, masther and man? 'Twould be quare if they were thried separate.'

Terence was convalescent when summer gave place to autumn. Unlike his former cheery bustling self, he sat at his window for whole mornings, gazing into a world of his own, as he leaned his wan face on his thin hand, smiling a faint smile when his kind nurse attempted to rouse him. She came more seldom by degrees, for indeed the poor lady's own life was thickening with disasters. The drunken soldiers' wives (specially selected by Major Sirr for their virago qualities) made a hell of her cosy little home, afflicting her daughter Norah beyond measure. There was no telling whether they might not, in a riotous freak, set the place ablaze if its mistress did not stop at home to watch them. Verily, even my lady's grudge might have been partially effaced, could she have beheld the tribulations which fell upon her ancient rival. Terence, then, lingered on, living a hermit life, whose solitude was broken sometimes by garbled tales of dread, such as his keepers chose to report to him. The world looked black, without a streak of light. He marvelled, in the vague dizzy way of an invalid recovering from illness, whether it would not be best to make an end of it at once. He felt the indifference as to death which distinguishes the faith of Buddha; longed to join

the ranks of those who, more blest than he, were marched past his door never to return; envied even the victims of the Foxhunters on the Gibbet-Rath; looked forward to his own trial as a release.

With a bare bodkin who shall fardels carry? His was bare indeed. Worn through and through—the stuffing gone. The sharp corners of the fardels were ploughing into his back. He longed to lay them down and be at rest. Sometimes he dreamed of Doreen, but not as of one who might be his in this life. He appreciated now what at one time he had contemned as girlish hysteria. Who might presume to talk of love amid the horrors of carnage, where victims had been done to death by hundreds with scarce an effort at defence? If he might live (his youth would assert its rights now and again for a brief instant), then perhaps—perhaps——What? No. He was doomed to die, and knew it—and was glad; for life deprived of all illusions and all flower-blossoms is a hideous thing. His turn would come, and shortly. It was merely a matter of days—of a little patience. The ‘scrag-boy,’ who wore a demon’s dress, with a hump and a horned mask that none might guess who did the hangman’s work, was a familiar object in the prison-yard below. He had placed the halter over many a gallant head, though not as yet around a noble’s neck. Well! that honour would soon be his—very soon—the sooner the better. With what a bitter laugh did Terence contemplate

the honour which awaited the overworked functionary ! Now and again he wished it might be given to him to look into Doreen's eyes once more. Their solemn depths would give him courage to face the great *peut-être*. Courage ! With self-upbraiding he spurned the thought, walking round his cell as swiftly as heavy irons would permit. Courage, forsooth ! He lacked not courage. 'Twere better that the two should meet no more on this accursed soil. In another world they would wander together in perpetual sunshine, by purling brooks, under softly waving trees—but would they ? Was there another world ? The spirit of the young man was so bruised that he hoped there might not be ; and, his illusion being gone, he yearned for *rest* only—unceasing—eternal—the long unbroken sleep without a waking. He shrank from the occasional visits of Lord Clare, who had brought his country to this pass—even deprecated those of his friend Curran with a new-born peevishness ; for in the face of his old ally he could trace tell-tale lines of weary watching and despondency, which spoke with eloquent meaning of the darkness outside the prison walls ; whispering of the universal sorrow he would so gladly have forgotten. Curran became nervous about him, fearing lest his mind should give way. Solitude, and such thoughts to brood over as his were, are good for no man. It was with a sense of relief therefore that the little man heard one day

that a companion was to be quartered on the councillor. Who that comrade was to be he wist not ; any companionship would be better for him than none. When that comrade came, Terence was feeding on his griefs, as usual. The door opened with the clatter and craunch of keys and bolts which no longer vexed him ; a slight figure in a full-skirted coat was pushed in without ceremony, who groped his way and stumbled in the half-obscurity as the door clanged-to again. Terence looked up with the slow glance of one whose faculties are corroded—rough with rust. His eyes met other eyes from which the light of hope had fled. It was Theobald who was to be Terence's new companion.

This unexpected meeting, under auspices so different from those which smiled upon their parting two short years before at Brest, unmanned them both. With sobs they were locked in one another's arms. Then, sitting side by side and hand in hand, each told his tale in whispers. Which of the two stories was the saddest ? Both their young lives were equally undone, and for nothing. True sympathy is like the brush of an angel's wing. They communed far on into the night, and the hearts of both were lightened.

From the moment of his capture, Tone felt a conviction that his race was run. On his road to Dublin indignities were heaped on him—he was heavily ironed, as though so frail an unarmed crea-

ture could beat down bristling bayonets. He knew that as an *émigré rentré* he must suffer, and accepted his fate with calmness.

It was a singular cavalcade which journeyed south from Donegal. There was a posse of rollicking yeomen to guard the prisoners, headed by Lord Glandore (in the blue and orange uniform of the Hillsborough club), at whose right hand rode Cassidy. My lord was not certain whether to be offended with the squireen or not. With regard to Theobald, he had, as usual, followed his mother's cue, who, when she set eyes on him, determined instantly that he should not be betrayed through her. Shane's good impulse bade him follow suit. He had known the fellow when a youth. To jump upon the fallen is at best a dirty trick. But there was no doubt that such voluntary blindness was more romantic than expedient. By the help of the English admiral, Shane fully intended to make capital out of this sea-fight, and win for himself an English peerage, and possibly some convenient sinecures. As it was, he was already rich and great. But the richer we are, the poorer we often believe ourselves to be. Shane fancied himself quite a pauper—a worthy subject for eleemosynary grants. Now, supposing that Tone had left Glas-aitch-é with the other prisoners unrecognised, there were ten chances to one against his so escaping in Dublin. A start of surprise, an

involuntary exclamation, would have aroused suspicion and settled his fate ; and then what would have been said of the candidate for charity who, knowing the traitor well, had failed to denounce him ? There was little doubt that Government would have laughed at my lord's craving for an English peerage—that he would have sighed for a pension in vain. On the whole he was not sorry that Cassidy should have shown himself a man of the world by exhibiting such laudable presence of mind. Tone had been denounced under his roof (he would make the most of this), but not by him, therefore was his conscience clear. Nothing could be better. On the whole he concluded to be charmed with Cassidy, chattering with him as he rode, and laughing at the giant's stories with a condescension that filled the latter's soul with joy. The giant took occasion to instil fears into the selfish mind of my lord with reference to Terence. How would his Majesty look on the brother of a rebel ? Of course it follows not that one brother should wield the smallest influence over another. But would the King admit this ; or would he frown on the elder, despite his grovelling, because of the sins of the audacious junior ? The sins of the fathers are to be visited on the children—at least the Jews have said so ; but nothing has been said about the enormities of one brother being visited on another. Such a rule would be very inconvenient. Now Shane had never shown any

genuine affection for Terence. Under no circumstances whatever was he prepared to make a personal sacrifice for him. Why should he? Cassidy's hints therefore fell upon fertile ground. His selfishness took alarm. Indifference turned to indignation. He had languidly regretted that Terence should be making such a fool of himself. He must bear the brunt of his own faults, and so on. Now he was consumed with rage in that his younger brother should show so little proper feeling as, for some silly crotchet, to jeopardise his senior's interests. It was vastly good of Cassidy to mention the subject, but he had better say nothing about it to my lady, who was hipped and out of sorts—not to say cross. My lord would make a point of assuring His new Excellency, so soon as he should arrive in the metropolis, of his undying devotion to existing Government and his abhorrence of his misguided brother's crimes.

My lady and Doreen in the family coach brought up the rear of the procession. Neither was inclined for talk—the minds of both being busy with netting plans—so each looked out of her own window listlessly.

For several weeks Terence and Theobald occupied the same cell—visited almost daily by Councillor Curran. The latter explained that Miss Wolfe, lately arrived in town, was burning to obtain access to them, but that her father peremp-

torily forbade her doing so. She sent them tender messages of hope, which both knew were futile, but which they answered verbally with thanks, pens and ink being withheld from them. Signs were not wanting that they were marked out as chief offenders, for precautions were taken in their case which were neglected in that of others.

Curran's reports of the state-trials were not encouraging. The jury were being skilfully manipulated into a likeness of independence. Three of the chiefs suffered in turn; two escaped. Terence was the sixth. With reference to him, which line would the jurors be instructed to take? The executive were dumb upon the subject. They also dallied with the life of Tone, till Doreen and his other friends became almost sanguine. As a French general he might perhaps be claimed by France, in which case England would certainly submit. Of course they would claim him. Yet how sluggish they were while a noble life was shaking in the balance! Theobald himself was the only one who never doubted. He rose quietly, and squeezed the hand of his companion without a word or gesture of surprise, when at length, on the 10th of November, the turn-key opened the door, and bade him 'Come!' for, being a soldier, he was not to be honoured with a state-trial—and he was glad of it.

The court-martial which was to cut his span was held in the cavalry-barracks, the roads leading to which

were thronged by anxious watchers, amongst whom professional wakers were prominent like ravens. Tone wore the uniform of a chef de brigade. His calm air and firm deportment favourably impressed his judges. He was every inch a soldier. Would he plead guilty or not guilty ?

‘I will give the court no useless trouble,’ the prisoner replied when questioned. ‘From my earliest youth, I have looked on the connection between Ireland and Britain as the curse of the Irish nation, and have felt convinced that while it lasted my country could not be happy. That Ireland was unable alone to throw off the yoke I knew. I therefore looked for aid wherever it was to be found. I sought in the French Republic an ally to rescue three millions of my fellow-countrymen from——’

The president interrupted the prisoner, bidding him refrain from improper language. Had he any reason to assign why sentence should not be passed on him ?

‘I have spoken and acted with reflection and on principle, and am prepared to face the consequences,’ Tone answered. ‘You do your duty. I have done mine. All I would ask is, that the court would adjudge me a soldier’s death. In consideration of the uniform I wear, I claim to be shot by a platoon of grenadiers.’

Then sentence of death was passed in usual form

—the manner of it to be afterwards arranged—and Tone was led back to the cell from whence he came, where Terence was eagerly awaiting his return.

Dublin sank into stupor when the news leaked out, for all classes respected the single-minded young martyr of Irish liberty. Curran was the first to arrive at Strogue with the sad intelligence—his eyes red, his face worn. Doreen turned her head away, too sorrowful for tears. My lady sat in a trance as though she heard nothing, for the temporary energy which had brought her to town had waned; the ghost at her elbow fanned her with his pinions, mesmerised her free-will. As for Sara, she gave way to hysterical weeping. Sara was domesticated now at Strogue. Her father's position, by reason of his attitude at the state-trials, was one of peril. It was quite likely that some day the Priory might be sacked by enraged Orangemen. Sara was no longer safe there. Curran brought the evil tidings to the family circle, but with it a crumb of comfort. The sentence was illegal; for, holding no commission under King George, Theobald should have been tried by civil law with the other state-prisoners. It was painfully true that, intoxicated by impunity, no one cared now whether a thing was legal or not. Hundreds of peasants and traders of the lower class were sacrificed every day by the military tribunals, which was all very well for the minnows. But Theobald's case was

different, Curran explained. He was a big fish. People would discuss the ins and outs of his arraignment. The French must be communicated with, and adjured to claim their general. Meanwhile time must be gained somehow. Curran would move for the case to be tried before the Court of King's Bench, which was sitting at the Sessions-House under the presidency of Doreen's father. This would give a week or two's respite—for Terence's trial was next upon the list, and that could be postponed by legal art.

The good lawyer trotted back to Dublin. For a whole day he interviewed influential persons—strove to obtain votes and money; but the torpor of fear chilled every heart. Not a finger would any of the cits stir for Tone—who had sacrificed his all for them. Then Councillor Curran, determined not to be beaten, went to the Sessions-House alone, and summoned my Lord Kilwarden, by virtue of his office, to claim the body of his godson. My lord gladly responded to the challenge. He despatched his sheriff to the provost-marshal, demanding that the culprit should be resigned to him; but that functionary declined to give up his prisoner. Curran groaned in spirit. His last chance was the Viceroy; but his excellency refused to interfere. There was nothing more to be done—absolutely nothing! The little lawyer wended his way back to Strogue in the evening, quite exhausted.

Doreen listened as he unfolded his budget, and, the last remnant of her artificial apathy melting away, girded up her loins for a struggle. She was not prepared, she said, to see the game so tamely given up. Tone first—then Terence! No, not without a supreme effort to save them. He of the silver tongue had failed? Well, then, she would even go now herself, and try what a simple woman's pleading could accomplish. She rose up straightway—it would not do to go quite alone—and bade Sara put on her habit. The two girls would force themselves into the presence of Lord Cornwallis, and wring those precious lives from the executioner. In the first instance they would importune the chancellor. Perhaps he would go with them and add his weight. Though it was growing dark, Curran offered no resistance. It was a last chance; their sacred mission should protect the maidens. Out of delicacy he had refrained from telling them that Theobald was cast for execution on the morrow.

But Doreen remained not long in ignorance. First she directed her course to the provost, at whose forbidding portals she found a stout woman quarrelling with a sentry. On perceiving the riders the woman rushed into the road, and clung to Doreen's skirts.

'They'll kill him in the morning, acushla!' she cried, weeping, 'and then they'll kill the other! It's your cousin that they'll be murdering, and his

wicked old mother sits like a carved stock. I know your purty face, though we've never spoke a word. Sure, ye're the judge's child. Go, now, and spake with him. Stay ! I'll go too, for it's the gift of the gab that comes from heaven. They'll be clever if they beat the two of us !'

It was Madam Gillin, who had been refused admittance to the cell of her *protégé* because his comrade lay under sentence of death, and had not yet been removed to solitude.

Thus was it, in the chaos produced by misrule, that these dissimilar members of an oppressed religion became acquainted at last. They had met so frequently over sick-beds or at Castle festivities that they seemed to be quite old friends, till the sound of an unfamiliar voice told them that it was not so. Is it not oftentimes thus ? Do we not know a person so well by sight that every turn of expression seems to bind us to him till we hear his voice, which strikes us as strange, and, finding no echoing chord within our hearts, warns us that we are strangers ?

The attention of the three ladies was arrested by a hubbub within the provost. There was a sound of chains, then the chaunt arose in chorus which was become, through the irony of fate, so piteous a mockery :

'What rights the brave ? The sword !
What frees the slave ? The sword !'

Alas, alas ! There was no sword now but that of an avenging tyrant ; when might it be sheathed ? Sara screened her face with her hand and cowered over her saddle-bow, for a dearly loved voice had been wont to sing that song. With deep thankfulness she remembered that the Destroying Angel who had been so busy was kind at least to her. It might have been Robert clanking his chains within that door. Thank Heaven, he was far away across the sea in London—safe ! Sara, guiltily glad in the midst of so much sorrow, reined in her horse, which shied upon the sudden opening of the door. Another voice—whose well-known richness sent a thrill through the bosoms of Doreen and Gillin—trolled forth in answer the Orange Hymn of ‘ Croppies, lie down.’ The singer stood with burly legs, like pillars, across the threshold, a huge dark shadow against the light behind—a shadow of evil to both Gillin and Doreen—Cassidy.

‘ Lie down, dogs ! or ye’ll have a taste of the triangles !’ he bellowed over his shoulder in his racy brogue, ere he perceived that he was watched.

Miss Wolfe’s brow contracted, for this was the Cassidy without the mask, whose aspect at Glas-aitch-é had affected her like a snake ; who had sold Theobald deliberately ; whose real self was so different from the other one that would fain have been her lover. Presently he was aware of horses’ hoofs, and recognised in the stream of radiance

which poured across the road the brown velvet habit which he had been wont idiotically to sigh after. The sight of it did not improve his temper. He troubled not to assume the mask again, for the die was cast for better or for worse—by her. He was now an openly protected ruffian, a patronised Orange braggadocio. Rollicking, disrespectful, he jerked a thumb to his hat and grinned at Miss Wolfe.

‘Leedies on a party of pleasure?’ he jeered. ‘Faix, Miss Doreen, ye’re fond of singing-birds. I’d bring ye insoide, but ’tisn’t clean enough. ’Deed it’s not, now. I’ll have it swept to-morrow. Is it Councillor Crosbie ye’re afther trying to peep at? I wouldn’t, if I were you, for he’s not the purty boy at whom ye used to lower your eyelids.’

Doreen replied with studied calmness: ‘You do well to drop disguise, Mr. Cassidy, since I know you as you are. If they are in your care, God help them!’

The marble beauty! Her scorn ate into his flesh like vitriol. He had, with long patience, shown a fictitious better side to her in vain. It was with fiendish pleasure that he exposed the real one.

But the contempt which knitted the maiden’s brow and distended her finely-cut nostrils proved too much for the giant’s pot-valour. He tried to wink with the slyness which used to keep supper-tables in a roar, but shrank under her steady glance,

and retiring with a growl, discomfited, slammed the door. Then, the spell removed, cursing himself and her, he went through a pantomime of anathema, battering the panels from within with heavy fists till the turnkeys ran out, supposing him to have been attacked.

‘She treats me like dirt!’ he gnashed out between foul oaths. ‘Yet, plaze the Lord, I’ll brand myself on her memory till her dying day. Damn her! A fight, is it? A fight be it—deadly—to the last gasp. We’ll see if her ladyship will be so hoity-toity then!’

The frown passed not from the maiden’s face with the vanishing of Cassidy. *He* there, in apparent authority! His presence boded little good to either of the dear prisoners.

What a queer character was Cassidy’s! Outwardly merry and good-humoured, he was by nature coldly fierce, calculating, callous. Reckless of life himself, its value to others made no impression on him. Playful and unpitying, commanding the smile and heeding not the sigh, he was a human paradox. The more Doreen considered him the less could she understand such a person, being herself true and impulsive and open as the day.

‘We will go to Ely Place at once,’ she said hurriedly. ‘Lord Clare must and shall help us.’

The ladies walked their horses in order that panting Mrs. Gillin might tell all she knew. Tone’s

doom was fixed. Of that she was sure. Neither the chancellor nor anybody else could avert his passing. But Terence—so careless and so joyous a short while ago—his case was harrowing. Both were specially interested in him. Madam Gillin had heard for certain that his trial was to come on within a week, and that his henchman had been well triangled only a few hours since to extort evidence against his master. His butchers had even stopped their practical joke at intervals in order to give him time to pull his thoughts together. Did he say anything? Nothing that the narrator was aware of. Her nurse, old Jug, witnessed the scourging, and scurried home all of a tremble at the horrid spectacle. In her presence he had writhed and shrieked for mercy—had gnawed his tongue lest it should escape control—had swooned—and was then tossed upon some straw—half dead, but faithful so far.

Sara clung to her saddle-pommel as she listened, lest she too should swoon; and it dawned upon Doreen that they were out on a fool's errand. Life is a bitter gift to many; yet, charged as we are with illusory hopes, what suffering must be ours ere we master its full bitterness! She came out imagining that mercy was alive, that justice was only torpid, that she could plead with human creatures to whom justice and mercy were precious. How mad! For mercy she saw with terrible clearness the triangle;

for justice, the shade of Cassidy. The Valley of the Shadow was of weary length, and she was groping in it darkly still. Nothing could come of this expedition; of that she felt convinced. Tone and Terence would be hanged. Terence, who held her heart—she knew it now with no tinge of shame, and gloried in it. She promised herself to be present at his trial, strengthening him by her sympathy. He might not be hers in this world. She had refused the boon of his affection when he had offered it; had presumed to preach to him—worse—had doubted him. Blind, fatuous girl! How justly punished! He was to die a martyr, blessed in that his life was to be in mercy shortened. She would tend his lowly bed, plant flowers on it, then take the veil and spend in prayer and vigil such days as it might be her lot to linger through. They would not be many. Heaven was very deaf. Surely this little boon of a speedy fitting might be vouchsafed to her jaded spirit? The tendency to asceticism which is buried more or less deep in all of us was asserting itself in this dark hour over Doreen. She looked forward to the cloister and the monastic habit with exultation.

By the time the party turned into Ely Place, Doreen had lost her courage and her hope. She felt as shy almost as Sara—panted only for the swift coming of the shot that she might stagger away into the covert.

Strange ! There was a party at Lord Clare's. All the windows were ruddy with light, filtering through cosy curtains. Incongruous spectacle ! Sedans were ranged in rows ; their bearers could be heard yelling in an adjacent tavern. The entry-door was wide open ; lacqueys in sumptuous liveries hurried in and out ; there was a clatter of knives and forks, the popping of corks and shouts of laughter.

Miss Wolfe was aghast. This contingency had not occurred to her. It never struck her that at such a moment men could be found who were capable of making merry.

‘Let us go home !’ timid Sara urged. ‘What can we do ? It’s dreadful !’

Mrs. Gillin laughed bitterly, and clutched Miss Wolfe’s bridle.

‘Do you know what they’re at ?’ she whispered, glancing round lest any one should hear her. ‘It’s a merry-making, true enough ; but there’s business at the bottom of it. I know more than I’m supposed to know, I tell you. The members of the Houses are chap-fallen. Their consciences are working inconveniently. Dinners are being organised by those in office to raise their drooping “sowls,” in case, at the last moment, they should waver in their allegiance. We know what they’re driving at—sure, it’s splendid ! The friends of Government dine together and drink toasts, and hob and nob with lusty choruses, and swill claret as pigs swill

wash, to keep their loyalty at boiling-point. While the friends of Erin sit in ashes, and the scrag-boy's worn to the bone with villain's work! It's a quare world, isn't it, Miss Wolfe?

The little party was beginning to enlist attention. Women on horseback did not often linger out so late. The gold braid upon their habits, the plumes in their hats, proclaimed their superior position. Obsequious yeomen sprang up as though out of the ill-paved street; lackeys surrounded them. What could be done for their honours? Sure, half the aristocracy was pledging my lord chancellor. Glorious, gay dogs! Was aught amiss? Sure, 'twas a pity to spoil fun! Which of 'em did the ladies want to see? A private hint might be conveyed to the lucky ones.

The soldiers leered at the ladies who dared to be out at such a time of night—with stringent orders as to curfew, too! It was like the impudence of their craft to dare seek their gallants at the chancellor's own door. Reckless, bold baggages! Insolent, good-looking hussies! Madam Gillin was preparing for a fray. She was a good hand at bandying retorts, and perceived at once the suspicions of the bystanders; but she was not destined to show her prowess on this occasion, for the astonished hall-porter recognised the ladies, and waddled out to welcome them as quickly as amazement and short breath would permit.

‘Is it Miss Wolfe, good luck? Sure his lordship your father’s here. Will I call him?’

‘No. I wish to see Lord Clare,’ Doreen stammered, her courage oozing strangely. ‘Don’t tell him that ’tis I.’

Sara, who all along had been supported in this singular adventure by the valiance of her friend, saw that Doreen was breaking down. The amazon—the cool, calm heroine! If she gave way, then must the case indeed be desperate. The poor gentle little thing instantly broke down, too, in most lamentable fashion. Tears rolled down her cheeks; blonde elf-locks hung over her eyes. She was a piteous object, if a lovely one, to look upon, and refused all Madam Gillin’s rough attempts at comforting.

Lord Clare came forth with a napkin in his hand. A silhouette, with arm upraised, appeared on the window-curtain, and the thick, quavering voice of Lord Glandore rang out above the din of glasses. ‘A toast! A toast!’ he shouted. ‘The Hero of the Nile, who has taught the French their bearings!’ Doreen shivered. An English toast from the lips of Terence’s brother. Alas! it signified little now what should befall the French. Ireland was beyond succour. Summoning together with a desperate effort the shreds of her wavering purpose, she implored the chancellor to go at once with her to the Castle. If the matter were clearly explained, the Viceroy would exert his right of clemency. Tone

might be saved. At least his passing might be postponed, which practically would come to the same thing. The trial of Terence might also be put off. In the confusion of troublous days like these, a few weeks make all the difference. A little time works wonders; each grain of trickling sand is priceless.

Lord Clare lifted the two girls from their saddles; bade a groom take the horses to his stable, and prepare a coach forthwith.

‘Come within,’ he said gravely. ‘It is not fitting that you should play the knight-errant thus; you might be insulted. What would your father think of it?’

He paced up and down his study in silent meditation until the carriage was announced, while Madam Gillin’s clack was stilled by awe, and the two girls watched his every movement with breathless eagerness. Then, striking his hands together as though his web of thought were complete, he stood opposite to Doreen with a glance less like the alligator’s than his was usually.

‘I’ve done my best already with Lord Cornwallis,’ he said; ‘but he heeds me no more than a crazy table. I begged him to quash this last trial; to show leniency with regard to your cousin. He retorted that he was forbidden to be lenient; that he had promised to let the trials run their course; that I had myself to thank for it, having complained of him to Mr. Pitt. I cannot stop this

trial. Mr. Pitt is as ungrateful, I find, as other men. He made use of me, then flung me aside without the least compunction. I see it now—too late. As for the other——’

Doreen sank on her knees before the chancellor.

‘As for Tone,’ he went on, severely, ‘it is right and fit that he should die. I would not move a finger to save him from the hangman. The mischief-maker! Come, my carriage shall take you back to Strogue. An officer shall ride behind to protect it.’ Then, seeing how distressed she looked, he took her hand, and continued, in a kinder voice, ‘I’m not so heartless as you imagine. Girls should not trouble their pretty heads with politics, which they are unable to understand. You think it very shocking to be giving feasts at such a time? Yet both your cousin Shane and your father are here for state reasons. These festivities have a political meaning. Now, get you home and go to bed to refresh your roses. My word! Madam Gillin, if I mistake not? A strange companion for my lady’s niece! Good-night. For his sake I will not tell your father of this escapade.’

And so the maiden’s effort was as vain as the little lawyer’s was. She sat sedate and still as the coach rattled on, murmuring once, in an undertone, ‘That I, who never kneel to any one but God, should have knelt at that man’s feet in vain!’ She thought of Theobald. What was he doing? Was he pray-

ing, or sleeping a last sleep? It must need all a soldier's courage to walk calmly to a scaffold. A cause should be a good one that has power to produce such martyrs.

* * * * *

While Curran and Doreen were straining every nerve for him, Tone stared moodily out into his prison-yard and watched the building of a new gallows there. 'A soldier's end was all I asked,' he sighed, 'and they even deny me that small grace.'

In the evening he took a tender farewell of Terence, and moved into an adjoining cell, which, as for a distinguished person who was condemned to death, had been set apart for him.

'Let us sit together to the last,' Terence objected, with a mournful smile. 'Why should we be parted who are both hovering on the confines of eternity? Well, come in and look at me again before you go.'

Theobald embraced his friend with clinging warmth, and whispering once more, 'We shall meet again,' withdrew. When the gaolers came to lead him to the gallows-foot they were too late. His body lay cold upon the pallet. An ensanguined mark was on his throat. He had escaped the scrag-boy—cheated 'Jack the Breath-stopper'—and was gone!



CHAPTER V.

THE ALTAR OF MOLOCH.



HOUGH Shane roared out gay toasts to the health of Nelson, he was by no means happy in his mind. No dwelling could be more disagreeable than Strogue. His supposed participation in the capture of the arch-martyr was speedily punished by the people. His cattle were houghed. It happened to be a late season ; all his corn was cut and trampled in one night by unseen avengers. He was in constant dread of Moiley, of being sent to his account from behind a hedge—ignominious exit for a king of Cherokees. He even felt inclined to do as many fellow-proprietors did, namely, to barricade himself in his Abbey and endure a state of siege till better times should come. In order to curry favour with the executive he underlined his open disavowal of his brother's acts, spoke flippantly of traitors ; an

unfeeling course which did not raise him in the esteem of blunt Lord Cornwallis. That nobleman expressed his opinion of Pat in no measured terms, vowing, as testily he poked the fire, that the Irish were unfit to govern themselves ; that, independent of the benefit which would accrue to England, the sooner a legislative union could be brought about, the better it would be for Ireland herself. The few months of his residence in Dublin had melted all his scruples on that head. On principle, Mr. Pitt's game was an iniquitous one. There could be no two opinions as to that. But the new Viceroy was not long in discovering that a union would materially improve the condition of the people by freeing them from the persecution of bigoted factions, provided that the King could only be brought to allow that the Catholics should be permitted to exist. After all, how could a scuffle about a union affect the lower orders ? Under home-rule were they not always slaves ? Did they not profess to hate the yoke of English and Anglo-Irish equally ? It would be a change of masters ; a change from tyranny to mildness ; for it was understood by Lord Cornwallis that the Reign of Terror had been brought about to disgust the country with its ruling classes ; and that that result being attained, a skillfully contrasted millennium was to be inaugurated instantly. The members of the senate had been cajoled, with a few exceptions, into disgracing themselves

beyond redemption. Could they be coaxed a stage lower—just one? Possibly. The Marquis Cornwallis, so far as his private honour was concerned, drew the line at this. He would supervise the stew, without direct personal interference in its brewing. It did not behove a man who had won immortal laurels in the field, to stoop to put salt on the tails of the Irish Lords and Commons. No! That unworthy work must be done by the chancellor and such others as were ready to paddle in the *cloaca*. This is how it was that, despite the paling of his star, my Lord Clare was giving dinners—symposia intended to act as birdlime to fluttering legislators—feasts at which hints were dropped of the future emoluments that awaited the complaisant. Mr. Pitt's ball was rolling steadily to the goal, while my Lord Clare swept clear its course. The bloody drama was all but concluded now. One more trial and the pageant at the Sessions-House would come to a close, and those who had escaped so far would probably be permitted to disappear in the medley. Nearly all had been tried who could be safely sentenced; there were some left whom it would be best not to try. The last serious state-trial must be got over without more ado—a trial complicated by private venom and a series of false statements which were twisted into attempted murder as well as treason; a trial which must be so conducted as to bear sifting by the opposition, examination by the scrutiny of Europe—a trial wherein both sides

would wrestle with all their strength and cunning. Which was to enact Jacob, and which the angel?

Theobald Wolfe Tone having vanished from the scene, the eyes of Dublin were still turned fearfully to the selfsame cell at the provost, wherein the companion of his last hours lingered. The people counted the moments that were left to him. Coronachs were crooned in secret before their time in many a cabin, with beatings of the breast. None doubted but that Charon, resting on his oars, awaited his next fare with confidence. As Terence himself expressed it—he stood on an isthmus between two lives. If one was desperately turbid, was it not better cheerfully to turn his back on it, and plunge with courage into the other?

Strogue Abbey from within, was no more pleasant to its owner than from without. Doreen's serenity, which for years had made Shane uncomfortable, assumed now a preternatural repulsion. Odours as of gravecloths seemed to emanate from her garments. The phosphorescence of the charnel-house was a nimbus to her head. Her brow was circled by the calm that appertains not to mundane matters; which chills the creeping souls of those who cling to earth. Instead of being shocked that Theobald should have evaded the offices of the scrag-boy, she was content. Her hero was beyond the reach of vulgar slings and arrows. His fretted rope was snapped; the boundary was passed, the inevitable plunge taken, and he slept. A few brief

days of swiftly speeding hours and Terence would be conveyed with him in the boat of Charon, who was waiting, to a less rugged shore. A little, little patience, and he too would sleep. Then she, less blessed than they, would withdraw from the troubles that weighed her down, and, meekly kneeling, would await the unveiling of the White Pilgrim. What a message was his ! ‘Home to the homeless ; to the restless rest !’ Doreen’s manner had something awful about it which scared another besides Shane—poor Sara, whose Robert was unscathed and well. The cairngorm eyes of the elder damsel were opened to their full width with the far-seeing blindness of a somnambulist. Her obstinate moods and perverse waywardness were quelled. She went about her avocations with mechanical deliberation ; dusted her cousin’s fishing-rods and guns in his little sanctum, as if he were only gone away upon a visit ; wore her best clothes to please her aunt ; tendered regularly each morning to cousin Shane a corpse-cheek whose coldness took away the little appetite which he could boast of ; conversed calmly about events—all but the one event, which for that matter each member of the household was equally desirous to shun. Strogue was full of spectres, and they rattled their bones in grim concert.

Councillor Curran, who looked like a moulting bird, grey-skinned, unkempt, essayed to speak words of comfort ; but she seemed not to under-

stand. What comfort could there be for one whose fairest prospect was the cloister and the grave? Theobald had passed; a procession of young shades like Banquo's sons had passed; Terence was prepared to join the shadowy convoy into spirit-land. Why prate of comfort? Had not Mr. Curran done all that might be done by man to prevent this hideous nightmare? Then he murmured something of a postponement—of a delay which might save the life of the last victim; but Doreen only shook her graceful head. It was better, she averred, to put aside illusions, and look straight into Truth's hard face. The postponement of the trial was impossible, and it was better so, for a speedy end was the best boon for a true Irishman to pray for. Mr. Curran's heart died within him to hear this girl, in the full flush of youth and beauty, speaking of this life as though existence had no charms.

If his stately cousin was a kill-joy in the household, Shane's mother was no better than she. My lady alternated between fevered activity, without apparent object, and helpless lassitude. Her own ghost kept faithful watch and ward over the countess. When Lord Clare told her gently that all hope of saving her son was gone, she gave herself over to the phantom hand and foot; and her old friend blamed himself for rushing, as we all have a proneness to do, to hasty conclusions of blame. It was evident that my lady was not in-

different to the fate of her younger-born. On the contrary, she was overwhelmed by a remorseful, fascinating ecstasy, which haunted her day and night—something connected with Terence in the past, which took from his mother the power to reason in clear sequence. She blinked like a white owl in the great chair in the tapestry saloon, heeding goers or comers no more than drifting leaves—engrossed all day by withering meditation till Doreen announced to her that it was time for bed. Then she permitted herself to be undressed and laid upon her back without a word, and blinked on at the ceiling through the still hours; and then was dressed and propped up again in the great chair. Some said she was broken; some that her circulation was weak; some that paralysis was imminent. Lord Clare and Curran alone amongst her friends perceived that it was her mind that was diseased—that there was a rooted sorrow festering there which no mortal hand might have strength to pluck away.

News of the countess's state was brought by Shane to the Little House, whither he escaped whene'er he could, to forget his dismal home in the company of Norah. But his welcome there was no longer what it used to be, even though through his good offices the dreadful infliction of soldiers' wives had been removed. Madam Gillin felt too strongly the heartless selfishness of Lord Glandore to be

decently civil to him, even though by civility her child might win a coronet. For a host of reasons, her sympathies were all with Terence. When Shane talked querulously about his mother, she listened eagerly, seeing in fancy the dying man at Daly's, who implored his stern wife to save herself from the torment he then suffered. But she would not. Nemesis, if slow of foot, is sure—her vengeance complete, if tardy.

The fatal day in due course arrived which was big with the fate of Terence. Curran implored Doreen to stop at home—in vain. Her resolve was immutable. Since her cousin's trial could not be postponed, she decided to see the last of him whom she had dared to doubt. Under escort of the little advocate, she entered the Sessions-House, and took her seat close to the dock. When the inevitable sentence should come to be spoken, the brown hand which he loved best in all the world would grasp his firmly. His courage would not waver. He was too good and true for that. But he should in that supreme moment read the love that went out from her, and with it a promise that she would not stay long behind.

Her father was to occupy the bench with my Lord Carleton. Toler (bully, butcher, and buffoon), whose nose was like a scarlet pincushion well studded, was down for the prosecution; he of the silver tongue for the defence. The hall was close

and inconvenient; its murky skylight thick with dust, its jaundiced walls sallow and blotched with damp. A lofty seat was prepared for the judges under a canopy at one end, surmounted by the royal arms. Below this were three crazy benches for counsel and attorneys; then came an open space on the floor of the hall; then a barrier enclosing a small pen, which was intended for public use, but which was already more than half monopolised by soldiers of the yeomanry. On the right side of the counsellors' benches was the dock; on the left, the jury-paddock, and a low table with a chair on it for the accommodation of witnesses. These, till they were wanted, leaned against the wall behind, conversing in loud tones with other members of the Battalion of Testimony, or fawning with fulsome scrapings about Major Sirr, who, with the pompous airs of a jack-in-office, acted as master of the judicial ceremonies. Government tried to make proceedings look less dirty by making much of the informers; did its best to dignify them in the eyes of those who were selected to decide the fate of the accused. These men, as all the world knew, were capable of anything, deeming that he was a pitiful fellow who, to please his master, would stick at a little perjury.

Curran marked uneasily that the battalion was in great force to-day. Was it out of curiosity, or were they here on business? Long impunity had developed all the native ferocity and brazenness of

these Staghouse demons. They wore new modish suits of clothes, with fashionable bows of ribbon at the knee, provided at Government expense. They looked sleek and well-to-do, for they were sumptuously fed and boarded, and provided with three guineas a day for pocket-money. Cock-ahoop was the jovial crew, for the band was too compact and strong to fear Moiley now; though time was when one of the number who was ill dared not take his medicine, lest haply he should find his quietus in it. Those times were past. The people were cowed and trampled. These men had, for a fee, sworn away the lives of their brothers and their fathers. Moiley had over-eaten herself — was languid through repletion. There was no room in her maw even for a strangled informer. They were growing rich, budding into proprietors; some screening their names under an alias from infamy; some too callous to feel any shame at all. Which of the rowdy knot was to do the work to-day? Since the battalion had become so highly trained, Lord Clare's ingenious invention with respect to the testimony of a single witness was a dead letter. That the oath of one person should, at a pinch, consign a man to the scrag-boy was a wholesome and judicious rule that was likely to save much trouble. But when you have a whole pack of hounds at your command, each one taught to yelp at a given signal, it is pretty sport to watch their

tricks. Besides, a pile of testimony, more or less irrelevant and contradictory, has an improving effect upon a jury. The Irish are eminently superstitious. These trials sometimes lasted through the night. Men were apt to get frightened at shadows on the wall, at the flickering candles with their guttering winding-sheets. It was well to pile Pelion upon Ossa, to crush out any stray drop of pity. A heap of evidence confused and dazed them. Many crawled home after sentence was pronounced, fully persuaded that they had only done their duty—that so many witnesses, each with his pat story, must of a surety have spoken truth; that they had earned their honest stipend without injuring their souls.

Which of the rowdy knot—and how many—were to do the work to-day? Cassidy—finely dressed in a grand coat of padusoy, with a posy in his breast, and a new bobwig—was lolling on the counsellors' bench cracking jests with Major Sirr, behind whom stood a bevy of admirers. The presence of those two boded no good to either prisoner. The town-major, indeed, had openly told Curran that if his defence was too clever it would be the worse for him; to which the little man had replied, with a finger-snap, 'In court a liar, in the street a bully, in the gaol a fiend—you shall reap your reward, meejor! I don't care *that* for you or your murderers by the Book!' and so had left him. He was

used to threats, and took no heed of them. They might as well have hoped to drive the stars from heaven by violence as to frighten John Curran into abandoning a client. And they were not mere clients for whom he had been pleading, for whose sake he risked his life during these trials. They were dear friends whom he loved, whom as brother-patriots he honoured. Some, despite his impassioned oratory, were slaughtered; others he saved. Ministers were secretly afraid of that silver tongue; for his burning words were reported and circulated, despite the efforts of the executive. All the world respected Curran; his exhortations wormed themselves into men's minds, and warmed into fruition there.

The Sessions-House in Green Street was filled with a strange company that day, as people forced themselves in till it was crammed. There was a buzz of expectation, which rose into a hubbub and fell again. The dock remained empty, though the morning had passed to noon. The heaviness in the air was sickening, by reason of the densely-packed assembly and moist garments; for the sun was veiled, the weather gloomy. A drizzling rain began to fall. Madam Gillin, in gaudy attire—a sight to kill parrots with envy—elbowed a passage through the mob, closely followed by old Jug, who, with her mistress, sat near Doreen. What an odd condition of society was this of Dublin! The prisoners who

would stand at the bar presently were closely connected, either by ties of blood or friendship, with advocates, judges, and many more in the surrounding audience. It was quite a family-party.

Mr. Curran reflected that no judge could be more partial than Lord Kilwarden; that some among the jury, with whom he was to intercede, were his own cronies. Yet was he not happy about his case. Lord Clare, for once, would have juggled in opposition to his usual principles; but Lord Clare's hands were tied through his own act. Through his own intervention the Viceroy had promised not to dip his finger in the Staghouse caldron till the cooking was complete. If the Viceroy declined to interfere, no one else could take the initiative. It was a deadlock. A pebble or two, if authorities napped for a moment, might have been inserted to make a wheel veer awry. How was it that the said wheel insisted upon keeping its accustomed track, and that extra celerity was even given to its motion? Some one unseen was pushing. Who was it? If higher powers were debarred from inserting pebbles, there was, unhappily, nothing to prevent interested inferiors from exerting private pressure. Curran felt that Cassidy and Sirr were at the bottom of this. What a cruel chance for Mr. Curran's client that neither Viceroy nor Chancellor could interfere!

How much longer was the delay to last? It was three o'clock. Sirr and Cassidy had retired and

returned refreshed. Curran sent out for sandwiches, which he divided with the ladies. Old Jug somehow seemed feverishly excited; nodding and mumbling to herself, moping and mowing, muttering weird incantations, which were impressed on the air with a gnarled finger. Mrs. Gillin ate her meat with a relish, in spite of grief. There are some appetites which no trouble may vanquish.

Doreen was in a trance-like state. Her skin was mottled, her eyes a dusky fire, surrounded by dark discs; a singular, unearthly smile played about her lips. To please her friend the advocate, she strove to eat, but her throat was contracted by spasms. She looked appealingly to him, and Curran took the food away with a sigh.

Toler came over to discuss matters with his adversary. All this was woefully illegal; but what did that matter? It was a melancholy comfort that a tattered remnant of the robe of Justice yet remained. Maybe in time, with coaxing, the lady would come back to Ireland. Who might tell what would happen next?

‘Will ye inform me, Toler,’ Curran interrupted, ‘who your witnesses are? I’m quite in a muzz, I tell ye.’

Toler clapped the little man upon the back, and roared with hoarse laughter.

‘That’s the critical brook in the steeple-chase, mee boy!’ he chuckled. ‘We rely on a surprise to

confound the prisoners. But I'll tell ye this, ould chap. Sirr, for some reason, is bent upon a conviction. Nothing you can say will make a difference. So cut it short, and let us out of this nasty hole. Be good-natured, and keep your breath to cool your porridge.'

So his suspicions were correct. Sirr was at the bottom of this, impelled by revenge for those slashes on his calves; urged too, probably, by Cassidy, who had made it up with the town-major. What could they gain by surprising the prisoners? Truly, the mechanism of the law was lamentably out of gear.

At last there was a stamping without—a surge of feet—a murmur of commiseration in the street. The judges, clad in crimson, took their places. Lord Carleton, ponderous and overbearing; Lord Kilawrden, nervous and subdued, with wrinkled brow and downcast visage—the one determined to do his duty, the other to avoid it if he could. Shortly afterwards a side-door opened. Terence and his henchman, Phil, were thrust into the dock. Terence peered round with contracted pupils, unable to distinguish friends from foes in the dim haze. He saw not Doreen, though she was close below. She clasped her hands upon her breast to still a rising sob when she marked how changed he was. Fever had paled his ruddy cheek, shrunk his burly frame. It was not that which shocked her, for that was to

be expected. It was the uncanny glitter, the reflection through open portals of a radiance belonging to another world—the look she had last seen in Tone, the glimmer of the grave—that it was which caused her heart to bound. He stood erect, one hand resting on the rail, the other supported by a green scarf about his neck. Even his gaoler had remonstrated as he dressed that morning: ‘Don’t wear such things. Why prejudice the court?’ To which he had answered, smiling: ‘The cause is already judged. It matters not what I wear; Erin will be green again when I rest under her sod—all the greener for her recent soaking.’

In striking contrast to his quiet dignity was the behaviour of his faithful henchman. He walked crooked and stiff, by reason of the whippings he had undergone. Jug Coyle scrutinised him with meaning from beneath her penthouse brows, and seemed satisfied. The trim, obliging, smiling Phil was transmuted into another and quite untidy person. ‘Twas not only pain that caused his steps to waver; there could be no doubt about it—he was *drunk*!

Terence was woundily annoyed; a flush of anger overspread his face as he placed his arm about his companion to check his stumbling, and gave him a savage shaking. Phil drunk, at such a time, who used to be so good and sober! He had not improved under the town-major’s auspices. This was no doubt one of the arch-devil’s tricks to turn a

solemn and impressive scene into a subject for laughter and contempt. It was a pity Phil was not more strong-minded. Had he disguised himself in liquor to steal a march upon his fears? The poor fellow was ignorant and underbred; fortitude was hardly to be expected from such as he. The jury sitting opposite had their orders. Perhaps it was as well for Phil that he could drown the knowledge of the present. On the morrow it would all be over—blessed morrow! Both he and his master would know by dawn the secret which oppresses all of us.

But Major Sirr appeared as surprised as the rest of the watchful audience, and was even heard to utter unseemly execrations. Who had dared to give his pet victim drink? It was no part of his intention that his troubles should be soothed. On the contrary, he had kept a surprise in store which was meant to be wormwood to the hapless creature.

After a deal of whispering and wig-shaking, counsel for prosecution plunged forthwith into the matter of the town-major's calves, and the shocking behaviour of certain ruffians to an upright gentleman, with the connivance of certain leedies, who should be nameless.

Toler's inflamed visage glowered at Madam Gillin; but she tossed her head and tittered. She dreaded not free-quarters, or the visits of virago soldiers' wives, now that Lord Glandore was back to protect Norah. Toler might bray any fiddle-

faddle that he chose. Sure my Lord Carleton, up there in the fine robes, had been mighty glad, once on a time, to spend his evenings at her cosy house. So counsel, discovering that he made no impression on her (she had always abstained from inviting him, which made him spiteful), droned on about his client's wrongs—for he had but done his duty in capturing such notorious rebels—his excellent qualities and virtues, the services he had done the state, the wicked wounds upon his calves. Was the law, which all respected so much, to leave a faithful servant without protection? And so on and so forth, in a tangle of verbosity, for an hour and more.

Irritated possibly by his husky voice, Phil's conduct grew more and more outrageous, drawing on him marks of indignant disapprobation from my Lord Carleton, a look of pained bewilderment from Lord Kilwarden. 'Was ever anything so indecent?' clamoured the members of the battalion, in loud whispers. 'Face to face with conviction, too! He had put himself beyond the pale of mercy. The brute ought to be scragged untried. He reeked of whisky, the besotted pig!' The odour of it, they vowed, reached their shocked nostrils across the court. In truth, he did comport himself after an intoxicated fashion. It was as much as his master could do to keep him in tolerable order. His legs were in constant motion. He sang and talked in a low tone, occasionally breaking into

convulsive fits of laughter ; grimacing and nodding his head to the witnesses, as one by one they sat on the table and swore away his life.

As the case proceeded—crushingly against the prisoners, who were proved beyond a doubt to have taken and administered the oath, to have worn green orders, and otherwise misbehaved themselves—his mood altered. He was getting over the madness of his drink. That was a mercy. Soon he would drop into a maudlin sleep, and his master might, unheeding of the monotonous and confused proceedings, take refuge from this mockery within himself until the verdict came. How dreary and how long was all this useless evidence ! The case looked as if it would last for ever. What an array of witnesses—and what lies they told ! At this rate it would be morning before the judges pronounced sentence. Already it was dark. Candles flared in rough iron sockets. The red judges loomed like lurid phantoms ; the jury were haggard in the flickering smoke. Mr. Curran leaned back in his seat exhausted, his neck supported on his clasped hands—resolved to husband his strength for a great effort by-and-by.

Drunken, disgraceful Phil became quiet. Old Jug, whose keen vision naught escaped, suggested to an usher to let him have a chair. He sank into the seat, his chin buried in his breast. His face was blue (was it the effect of light ?), his pupils

dilated, his breathing stertorous. The air was sickeningly close. Sweat stood in drops upon his forehead. Could he be fainting? No. He rallied, and commenced muttering again.

The hours went by, and yet the farce continued. No jot of the informal formalities was omitted. Those who had resolved to hang the prisoners were evidently determined that there should be no lack of justification for it. Half the battalion had told their story. Curran listened, and said nothing (what was the use of cross-examining these men?) till he saw the big figure of Lieutenant Hepenstall advance. Then, turning to the judges, he grunted:

‘They’re not content with witnesses, my lords; they’ve brought in the Walking Gallows, to work them off at once! Sure, isn’t it convenient and obleeping?’

Time moved on steadily. Terence was as upright and motionless as a statue. He had learned by this time who was sitting near. A small brown hand had fluttered into his, to tell by occult pressure its own sweet tale. Doreen was as still as he.

Drunken Phil tore open his shirt, gasping. How dense the air was! It was cruel to drag out the proceedings thus. His head was heavy—he could not hold it up; so, resting his fingers on the dock-rail, he laid his wet face on them. By degrees he sank into a snoring slumber, his limbs twitching now and then with a tremulous convulsion. The

visage of old Jug was illumined with a mysterious satisfaction. Not one of his movements escaped her keen observation; she drank in every shiver. Presently she plucked her mistress by the robe, and, like a wild woman, whispered something in her ear. Madam Gillin, who, overpowered by heat, had been dozing, woke with a cry, and turned her affrighted gaze from Phil to her nurse and back again.

‘Is it throe, Jug—is it, by the Holy Mother?’ she asked, in an awed whisper.

‘Throe ’tis, by mee sowl!’ returned the other. ‘He is a farrier, isn’t he? And Crummell’s curse is on the likes of him, isn’t it? He begged the ould collough for a root, and she gave it; and, by St. Patrick, ’twas well done!’

In deep agitation Mrs. Gillin motioned Curran to her side. She saw it all. It was by her own order that Jug had visited the farrier. Farriers and colloughs are national foes. Phil—faithful fellow!—had begged the collough to exercise her skill in herbs on him. He could bear hanging—had thus far endured the lash. But torture may be pushed beyond our power of bearing. Rather than run a risk of betraying the master whom he worshipped, he had taken poison, and was dying.

Curran’s genius embraced at once the new element in the situation. It struck him instantly that by this sacrifice the poor fellow might perhaps unwittingly have saved his master. When did he

take the poison? How long would it be before its work would be accomplished? If he were to fall dead—there—in the dock, before the court assembled, under the eye of the public, it would create such a sensation that the trial would be perforce adjourned. The harrowing details of the suicide would then be spread abroad; they would do much to bring the vile cruelties of the yeomanry home in all their loathsomeness to the British mind, which was so culpably indifferent as to what happened in this colony. There would be a revulsion—an energetic protest. In the confusion Terence might be saved! Poor faithful Phil! He knew not the extent of the service that he rendered. His life would not be sacrificed in vain!

‘How much longer will the poison take to work?’ Curran whispered in Jug’s ear. ‘What was it?’

‘Sure, it was a tiny root of water-dropwort. Like an illigant parsnip, faith! How much longer? An hour perhaps—maybe two—certainly not more than three.’

It was eleven at night. Toler had two more witnesses to call, he said. If cross-examined they might be made to detain the court for an hour or so. After that the silver tongue must move to good purpose—must toy with argument and rhetoric till the doomed man dropped.

The virtuous ire of the town-major was kindled.

‘The drunken brute is asleep!’ he called out. ‘What an insult to the court! Sure, he’ll have a long sleep enough when Moiley eats him. Wake him up!’

Major Sirr was particularly anxious that he should be aware who the next witness was. By dint of shaking, the ushers roused the prisoner from lethargy. With brows painfully knitted he tried to raise his leaden lids, beheld with dilated pupils a blurred vision on the table; sank again without recognition into unconsciousness. Jug too beheld—and gave a low growl.

The new witness was Croppy Biddy; she of the russet locks, who since the burning of the ‘Irish Slave’ had given herself up to drink and to debauchery—who was become one of the shining Staghous lights—one of the pet agents of an honourable executive—the Joan of Arc of the Battalion of Testimony. She was dressed like a lady, in a costly beaver with ostrich plume, and a laced riding-dress—the same as she was wont to wear when galloping at the head of a troop of dragoons in search of food for Moiley. No longer a slattern serving-wench in a low shebeen, but a paid and honoured favourite of Government; a lying, drunken, brazen hyæna. This was an admirable joke of Major Sirr’s. What a pity it was that it should miscarry! What humour could be more sly and delicate than to clinch a man’s fate by the false witness of her whom he had elected to love? Yet,

thanks to some officious idiot or other, the bit of fun was spoiled. Biddy was there—saucy, pert, shameless, ready to go any lengths; but her lover was asleep, with his chin upon his breast. The surprise missed fire.

As it turned out, though, the joke was just the least bit too racy. The loud giggling laugh, the palpable untruths flung carelessly about by Biddy, shocked and disgusted the entire audience. Lord Kilwarden turned red, and bowed his face over his papers; even Lord Carleton coughed; and there was an angry murmur from the public who packed the floor.

Mr. Curran, no longer listless and dejected—for hope had revived again—turned the wretched woman round his finger; ensnared her with soft suggestions; led her floundering along from perjury to perjury, turned her inside out; then with a sarcastic bow to Toler, congratulated him upon his witness. By skilful fence half an hour was gained. Counsel for prosecution glared at Sirr. Was this the way to train up witnesses? Biddy was hustled off the table, for her training was lamentably incomplete. There was one more yet to come. It was to be hoped he would do away with the bad impression she had left.

This time it was Doreen's turn to utter a stifled cry, while her fingers clasped more closely those of Terence. Had that wretch no compunction? Had

he no mercy—this villain who had wriggled himself by specious arts into the confidence of honest men—this snake in the grass—this bravo who, smilingly looking in your face, could coldly choose the most fitting moment for stabbing you? It was Cassidy—actually Cassidy, who before her, before Lord Kilwarden, before Curran, could get upon the table to swear away the life of him whom he had called friend.

Even the little advocate, whose faith in the innate goodness of human nature was not strong, was staggered.

‘I’ve heard of assassination by sword and dagger,’ he muttered; ‘but here is a ruffian who would dip the Evangelists in blood!’ The giant took the Testament and kissed it.

‘Why make him swear at all?’ scoffed Mr. Curran. ‘Why let a murderer’s touch pollute the purity of the Gospel? Well! if you will go through the mockery, let it be, I pray you, on the symbol of his profession—the knife.’

Cassidy scowled down on the sturdy scoffer, and looked round at his comrades with an air of reproachful innocence, which was speedily answered by a burst of menace and a clash of arms from the yeomanry behind, accompanied by threatening looks and gestures. Mr. Curran, drawing himself up to the full of his small stature, fixed his eyes sternly on them, and exclaimed in a loud voice:

‘You may assassinate me, gentlemen, but you shall never intimidate me!’

This was a scandal. Things were going ill. Lord Carleton came to the rescue.

‘Beware, Mr. Curran,’ he said, ‘lest you forfeit your gown. A little more of such unseemly language and I shall commit you.’

‘Then we shall both have the consolation, my lord,’ Curran retorted, with a bow, ‘of reflecting that I’m not the worst thing you have committed.’

Lord Carleton looked up with wonder at the skylight. What was the world coming to? He glanced at Lord Kilwarden, who leaned on his elbow, taking no share in the business, his eyes shaded with his hand.

Counsel for prosecution played skilfully on his witness—an admirable witness, who merely answered questions, instead of blurting forth rash and inconvenient statements. Mr. Curran cross-examined him as cleverly, but with little effect. He could elicit nothing new or special. People were accustomed to find themselves handed over to the scrag-boy by their most intimate friends. Mr. Curran, indeed, was tedious to lay such stress on the point. The jury shuffled on their seats. Lord Carleton yawned. New candles were placed in the sockets by attentive ushers. At this rate it would certainly be morning before the affair was settled.

Very monotonous and very dreary! A rat-tat of

subdued voices in question and reply. The paled candles dim and wan through a mist of collected breath—a stifling, noisome atmosphere of clammy heat which made the temples of all to throb, the ears to sing. Though the case was one of palpitating interest, men's strength gave way, women felt ill and dizzy. Lord Carleton, to keep his wits clear, inhaled the fumes from a sponge dipped in vinegar. Mrs. Gillin sniffed at the rue upon the dock-rail.

Still Terence stood erect and pallid—motionless. Still Phil's respiration laboured with stertorous snores. His teeth chattered at intervals, as if from cold; his fingers twitched, his knees trembled. Was it the effect of light? his eyes seemed protruding from their sockets. But there were no signs of the end yet.

It was past midnight when he of the silver tongue arose for the defence, and people roused themselves to listen, for they were accustomed to expect from him rapid electrical transitions from passion to passion, from the deepest emotions which agitate the soul to the liveliest combinations of sportive imagery; whimsical metaphors, such as at one moment seemed culled from the dunghill, at the next to be snatched from heaven. He implored the jury to consider the reputation of the witnesses who had striven to wreck these men. He entreated them to consider what objects save the highest and

most pure could have induced a noble to desert his ease and risk his neck for Erin.

‘Do you dare,’ he cried, in crystal accents which rang with startling clearness along the cobwebbed rafters, ‘in a case of life and death, of honour and of infamy, to credit a vile informer—the perjurer of a hundred oaths—a beast whom pride, or honour, or religion cannot bind? He dresses like a gentleman—the tones of his soft voice savour of growing authority. He measures his value by the coffins of his victims, and, in the field of evidence, appreciates his fame as an Indian savage does in fight by the number of scalps with which he can swell his triumphs!’

The advocate laid stress upon the awful responsibilities of a jury; striving to wring their consciences, though he knew that each man among them had received his wage. He knew that nothing he could say would make them waver. Yet now he had a new courage and a new hope that distilled jewels from his lips, which almost caused the degraded jurymen to blench. From time to time as his eloquent periods rolled out in majestic waves, he turned an anxious eye upon the farrier whom Jug sat watching with the gaze of a lynx. How she had botched the job! How long the soul wrestled ere it could burst its bonds!

Then, to the amazement of Toler, he lost his temper with the jury, and told them unpleasant truths,

rating them soundly for their sins. His opponent thought he must be mad to rage where it was so evidently his interest to conciliate. But Madam Gillin listened and nodded approval; for she knew that it was only a matter of gaining time, and that as there was to be no verdict there was no use in blarneying the jurors. With what eloquence he talked! His words seemed to flicker in sunlight—a kaleidoscope of gems, some rough, some polished, strung loosely on a cord.

‘Life can present no situation,’ the orator said, ‘wherein the human power of man can be so divinely exerted as yours should be now; and if any labours can peculiarly attract the approving eye of Heaven, it is when God looks down on a human being assailed by human turpitude; struggling with practices against which the Deity placed His special canon, when He said, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour; thou shalt not kill!” We embrace the principles of the British constitution; and when I look on you, the proudest benefit of that constitution, I am relieved from the fears of advocacy, since I place my clients under the influence of its sacred shade. This is not the idle syco-phancy of words. It is not crying, “Lord! Lord!” but doing “the will of my Father who is in heaven!” If my clients had been arraigned before a jury of Cornhill shopkeepers, they would ere now be in their lodgings. The law of England suffers no man to

be openly butchered in a court of justice. The law of England recognises the innate blackness of the human heart—the possibility of villains thirsting for the blood of their fellow-creatures; and the people of Ireland have but too good cause to be acquainted with that thirst. At the awful foot of Eternal Justice I call on you to acquit these men. Their characters have been given. Nothing could be more pure. In the name of Justice I implore you to interpose, while there is time, between the wanton perjurer and his ensanguined feast; that in the next life your reward may be more lasting than the perishable crown which the ancients gave to those who saved a fellow-citizen in battle. Your own turns may come, for the informer has bowels for himself alone! If it should be the fate of any of you to count the moments of captivity, in sorrow and in pain, pining in a dungeon's damps, may you find refuge in the recollection of the example you this day set to those who may be called to pass judgment on your lives! Recollect too that there is another, more awful tribunal than any upon earth, which we must all some day approach, before which the best of us will have occasion to look back to what little good he has done this side the grave. I do pray that Eternal Justice may record the deed you are about to do, and give to you the full benefit of your claims to an undying reward, a requital in mercy upon your souls!

The growing fog, the deep silence, the midnight hour, the flickering candles, enhanced the effect of Mr. Curran's words, which were spoken with a rapt solemnity that sent a thrill of awe through his impressionable audience. The vision of a wrathful angel with a fiery sword rose before their excited imagination—of an avenging God who knew that they, the jury, were bought. Women rocked themselves and wrung their hands, and stuffed ends of shawls into their mouths to check their wailing. The jurymen hovered 'twixt greed and fear. The advocate paused for an instant, to wipe his brow, and to allow his sentences to sink into their minds.

There was a hum of muffled talk, of groans and lamentation, before which the moaning in the court was hushed. It came from the dock. Phil was awake and sensible; had risen on his tottering feet, was swaying from side to side as he clung to his young master. Terence saw now that he had wronged his henchman, who was not drunk, but ill. His features were livid, his lips blue, so was his swollen tongue; his teeth rattled as in ague; his eyes saw nothing, though they stared painfully; a steam ascended from his hair.

'Master Terence!' Phil gasped, with thick effort, 'I could not help your being taken—though it was—it was my fault. They pushed the heap—of rope—off of my head. They shall get ne'er a word

out of me—ne'er a one—though they flay me to the bone. Master Terence—master—will ye forgive——'

Phil staggered and slid from the grasp of his fellow-prisoner to the floor, and lay there on his face.

'One of your victims appears to be insensible,' Mr. Curran remarked shortly.

'Deed it seems so,' acquiesced Lord Carleton, peering through his glasses. 'A very indecent exhibition. Does there chance to be e'er a doctor in the coort?'

One of the jurymen was an apothecary. He left the box and turned the prostrate figure over.

'Can ye speak with assurance of the man's state?' demanded the judge.

'He is near his end, my lord,' answered the jurymen.

'Is he now—are ye sure?' What with the heat, and what with the untoward incident, my Lord Carleton was puzzled. No help could he get from Lord Kilwarden, who leaned with his elbow on the desk and his eyes shaded by his hand.

'Open the windy!' puffed the judge. 'For the Lord's sake let's have a little air; maybe he's only sick. Can ye rouse him to hear his judgment?'

The apothecary laid a palm upon his patient's heart.

‘I cannot, my lord,’ he replied. ‘The man is dead!’

Already powerfully impressed by the surroundings and the lawyer’s warning, the people could endure no more. A panic seized them. They rushed to the doors as though stifled by some fell miasma, and battled to get out. The women screamed that they were being trodden under foot; the men rained frantic blows upon the doors, tearing clothes and fingers as they dragged them down. It was a scene of unreasoning frenzy, such as none who were involved in it might ever forget. The angel with the fiery sword was there; though invisible, his presence could be felt. Lord Carleton ordered the remaining prisoner’s removal. Doreen’s robe gleamed white in the first tinge of morning as, standing by his side, she wound her arms about his neck. By-and-by Curran gently disentangled them, and led her to her father, whilst dragoons formed round the patriot, and cleared a passage for him through the mob.

‘More men to secure him in Kilmainham—there’ll be a rescue!’ bawled Cassidy, who was driven to overmastering wrath by the posture of Miss Wolfe, under his very nose.

‘Fear nothing,’ Terence replied; ‘I will go quietly.’

Lord Kilwarden and Curran bore the maiden to a coach, and carried her back to Strogue. Both

were so filled with thankfulness for this reprieve that they shook hands again and again, while Miss Wolfe lay speechless in the carriage-corner. Her nerves had been strung to extreme tension for the worst. Sudden joy is more hard to bear than sorrow. The finely tempered steel which had withstood so many assaults, gave way under the last shock. She remained long oblivious of the world's affairs, tenderly nursed by Sara, who wondered, as day followed day, whether her reason would ever return from the far-off groves in which it wandered.



CHAPTER VI.

APRÈS LA MORT, LE MÉDECIN.



HE chancellor was glad and sorry. Glad in that the son of his old friend should be reprieved, whereby (as he supposed) her great trouble would be lightened; sorry that so singular a scandal should have attended this trial—a scandal which would not make the completion of his task the easier. But the ball was so near its goal—it had gathered such velocity in transit—that it would take a very grave obstacle at this stage seriously to impede its course. So the chancellor gave up being sorry, and was altogether glad that the trial had ended as it did. He reflected, however, that something would have to be done to entice the public mind away from gyves and bolts, and prepare it for the beginning of millennium. The *Gentleman's Magazine* of that particular date

happened to contain an account of a sojourn of the royal family at Weymouth, with minute details of how the Princess Amelia did tambour-work, while his Majesty, with his own august hands, was deigning to fry sprats for supper. Lord Clare saw his way to a delicate bit of flattery. He had the arcadian tale printed off and posted on the walls of Dublin, that loyal minds might be edified and touched by the simple manners of their sovereign ; but (as was become usual) the chancellor was thwarted by the Viceroy, who said the whole thing was fudge, and ordered the placards to be pulled down. The Privy Council censured Lord Kilwarden for his pusillanimous behaviour at the trial, alleging that it was a pity to see a man high in office who showed so little resource in an emergency ; but at the same time they decided *nem. con.* that there must be no more state-trials. The story of Phil's dramatic end would certainly be reported in London, with additions, and my Lord Moira would be sure to make the most of it. Mr. Pitt would certainly be angry at the *contre-temps*. From first to last it was a miserable business which could not, unfortunately, be hushed up. In spite of the Gr—t P—rs—n—ge searching questions would be asked. Mr. Pitt must somehow be placed in a position to state that suffering Erin had gone through her operation and was comfortably bedridden for the remainder of her days. To this end the members of the Irish senate must be brought

back from the state of siege in ancestral castles, which they were pleased to call 'villegiatura,' without delay; by threats, and bribes, and promises they must be induced to haggle no more over their mess of pottage. Ireland must seem to retire from the world with a good grace, and be tucked snugly up between the sheets for evermore.

Lord Clare was satisfied that the decisive moment had arrived, for the country was quiet enough now for the question of union to be freely ventilated. It was delightfully quiet—with the silence of the tomb. The lords, he was convinced, were ready for anything, provided they were well paid. When they were assured that patriotism and interest were directly antagonistic, the former was certain to come off second best. Lord Clare informed the Viceroy that the proposition might be put at once and carried, if only His Excellency would be a little civil to the senate.

But His Excellency hated tortuous groping; he abhorred the Irish peers; begged that he might not be asked even to sniff the noisome broth. When he came over he attached to his person a young Irishman of parts, who was not squeamish. The chancellor had also shown that he was not squeamish. These two Irishmen—my Lords Clare and Castle-reagh—must do all the broth-stirring; the sooner the brew was ready, the sooner they would receive their wages—the sooner would he, the Viceroy, be

enabled to leave the wretched country and go home. Once the union carried, every one would be delighted—except the Irish; and even they, in due time, would come to be glad also. Lord Clare's eye kindled with satisfaction. He beheld the possibility, if this captious Viceroy would only depart, of himself returning to his former position. He saw himself again the awful statesman, before whom courtiers should salaam, as they used to do; he saw his ambitious vision (obscured for an instant) realised at last. There were only a few more yards of mud to wallow through before reaching *terra firma*, and then he would take a bath and, by dint of scrubbing, appear no more dirty than his fellows. So he made up his mind, as Lord Cornwallis declined to help, to manage the caldron in conjunction with Lord Castlereagh, and the pair were quite engrossed by the phases of their hellish cookery.

There was one matter that was hemmed round with grievous difficulties, which had not yet been settled, and which troubled every member of the Privy Council not a little. What was to be done with those leaders of the United Irishmen who were still awaiting trial at Kilmainham? What was to be done with Tom Emmett, Russell, Neilson—what with the arch-traitor Terence Crosbie? It was evident that a repetition of the fiasco of the other day must on no account be risked; they must not be tried. Neither must they remain at Kilmainham,

for it was probable that they had relations with the outer world, that they were plotting still, and might possibly give more trouble by-and-by by organising a new Directory. There was no object now in allowing them to plot. On the contrary, once the union carried, it was essential that Ireland should be at peace. Lord Clare knew perfectly well, while he prated about peace, that he had wilfully hailed the silence of a cowed nation as a restoration of contented tranquillity. He knew very well that if the English army and the soldier Viceroy were removed, and the leaders permitted to scheme on, the country would be in as much danger as ever; that, union or no union, millennium could not supervene until time should blot away the nefarious means employed. What could be done with these dangerous conspirators? They could not be tried and executed; they could not be released, or kept in Ireland, or shipped to America. As white elephants, they daily became more cumbersome; it was a pity that gaol-fever would not take them off. But they were provokingly well, in spite of privation and suffering. Their wings must be cut somehow. Couriers posted to and fro between London and Holyhead, bearing despatches on this difficult point. While Lords Clare and Castlereagh were making final preparations for the union, Lord Cornwallis was striving to devise a plan which should not be too glaring an example of broken

faith. He implored. He begged. He threatened. Good King George was as tractable as usual. The odious villains were either Papists, or Protestant defenders of Papists, which was worse. The apostasy of these Protestants was more grievous than the sin of Popery itself. They should receive no mercy. No compact with such rascals could be binding. He would not have them banished across seas, where they might achieve some measure of happiness. They must be kept in duress as scarecrows—an awful warning to other ruffians. There was no moving him. At last ministers gave way, and it being decided that the white elephants should be shipped to Scotland, commissioners were appointed to select a suitably unpleasant spot where they might languish without danger to the community.

There is a fortress on the extremity of a tongue of land which juts into the Moray Firth, the country round about which is destitute of houses or of trees—a dreary, forsaken desert devoid of vegetation. The very place ! The obdurate ruffians should be transported to Fort George, as soon as it could be made strong enough to keep them safe.

Meanwhile the Viceroy was guilty of an act of politic clemency which would have put the King in a bad temper if he had known of it. He determined that, as several months must elapse before the fortress would be ready, it would be well to permit the arch-villain Terence to go home—on parole—

provided he would give his word to plot no more. The circumstances of his reprieve were producing a profound impression in society. The romantic devotion of the servant—the imminent danger of the master—were so dramatic, that high-born dames regretted their absence from the moving spectacle. They professed to be vastly interested in a young man who could call forth such a proof of affection from another, and vowed that it was a shame he should be sacrificed. Sure, Moiley ought to be content with a nice heratomb selected from the lower classes. Lord Cornwallis perceived that here was a good opportunity of paying the nobles a compliment. They were so important a factor in the matter of the union, that it was well to conciliate them as a body; and what better way was there of doing so than by treating one of their order with indulgence? He therefore intimated to Lord Clare that he was inclined to do what he might to please him—that he saw the mistake he had made in allowing Lord Glandore's brother to be tried—that he, Lord Clare, might, if he wished it, inform the dowager countess of a special favour that was in store for one of her known loyalty—namely, that she might expect to have the custody of her erring child until the time of his vanishing from Ireland.

Lord Clare was charmed, and hurried to Strogue with the good news. My lady was a riddle, whose behaviour was always different from what might be expected. He knew that Terence's danger had

placed her on a gridiron where she was consuming slowly, and naturally concluded that her joy at his reprieve would culminate when she was told that she might keep him near her for a while. This extraordinary young man, for whom a servant would sacrifice his life, must needs be tenderly beloved by the mother to whom he owed his birth. If she was in raptures she had a queer method of displaying her feelings. Her cheek turned a shade more pale than usual. Bowing her head as under a new blow, she murmured, 'It is well.'

Though he knew and esteemed the countess, Lord Clare's acquaintance with my lady was not so intimate as ours. He had not seen her at Glas-aitch-é, when every chair and table was babbling of what had happened there. He did not look on her when with a spasm of self-reproach she discovered that the undoing of her second son would not be so heartrending as it ought to be. He did not know that in face of Terence's doom she was torn by two distinctly opposite emotions; that while his fate crushed her as a judgment for past sin, it also brought a sense of relief. He was not aware that with his death a burthen of long-endured apprehension would have been lightened, whereby her tortured soul might attain a semblance of rest at last.

We soon make up our minds to the inevitable. My lady had made up her mind that Terence was to die. Her pangs of conscience were bitter, but the

dreadful thing was settled; no influence of hers could affect the youth's fate now, whatever it might have done in the past. So low was she fallen that she found some poor relief in that. But this new, unexpected freak of Fortune brought all the bitterness of her trouble back again; and with a sigh she roused her distempered faculties from lethargy and bestirred herself—for the dreary battle was, as it seemed, not over yet. The implacable phantom kept whispering in her ear that it was not too late even now to set right the wrong; that there still was time if she would force those stubborn knees to bend and abase her pride.

My lady loathed herself for the thoughts which held possession of her mind. When the chancellor brought his news, she concealed the sudden turbulence within. Strangely enough, the mother's sympathies, even at that moment, were not for Terence—the son who had escaped the halter—but for Shane; and a great fear for him leaped up in her heart, to the crushing out of natural feeling. Terence was snatched from the grave as by a miracle. A foreboding took strong hold of my lady's mind that this was for a purpose—that Heaven, not satisfied with the penance of a lifetime, was determined that she should blab out to the world the secret which, lying on her bosom, had seared her life. Oh! why did she not accept her punishment all those years ago, when the task would not have

been so hard? The earth had been no pleasant place of sojourn to my lady. When she thought of all she had borne since the old lord's death—of the utter futility of the penance—she became rebellious, and gnashed her teeth at the simpering portrait of him who had got off so easily. She rebelled against the iron sternness of Heaven. She was to bend her proud knees, was she—and confess? Her whitened hair and ashen cheeks were not to be taken into account? Very well, then. She defied Heaven; religion was a delusion and a snare; the Lord of Heaven unduly just. Tossing her favourite tracts into the fire, she swore she would not be driven to speak, though the ruin of her soul should be the penalty. At the time when it was decided that Terence was to die, she spent the long hours in reverie over the past—in poignant regret that he should have to be thus sacrificed. She reflected that if she had spoken all those years ago he would never have joined the popular side—would never have risked his neck—of that she felt assured; and so she felt in some sort as though she had herself handed him over to the scrag-boy. It was an awful thought, and it had weighed down her intellect. But now came a revulsion. It was not to be so. He was to live as a reproach. Heaven was hounding her down, so she stood at bay. If Heaven had accepted the penance of a life without requiring that the original transgression should be cancelled by

confessing it she would gladly have borne the penance to the end of a long weary existence. But that the penance should not be accepted in any way as an equivalent, was maddening to her sense of justice. She bestirred herself; sat no longer dreaming the days away. The household whispered that my lady was herself again, that the joy of her son's reprieve was accountable for the happy change. All thought this save Gillin, who knew her secret. That excellent person scratched her untidy head with a comb and pondered. What did the wicked old woman mean to do? There was more mischief brewing—of that she felt quite sure. Well, Terence was saved from the gallows by direct interposition from above. He was not intended to be made a sacrifice, any more than Isaac was when his father's faith was tried. A few months remained to him before he was to be taken to his Scottish prison. If my lady should allow him to go there, without making an effort to prevent it—why then she, Madam Gillin, would open her mouth and speak. Her lips had been closed over-long. Had she not sworn an oath beside that deathbed? It would become her bounden duty to interfere, if the countess lacked courage so to do.

It was touching that in moments of severest trial my lady should always have been engrossed by the interests of her black sheep. She always thought of Shane rather than of herself; and he gave her

little satisfaction in return for this great love. Never very white, he was daily growing darker. One evil thought engenders another ; one evil deed makes a second necessary : we were all taught that in earliest infancy, and Shane's condition was in accordance with the rule. His prowess in the past as King of Cherokees had brought him little blame in public estimation, for the Glandores had been fire-eaters time out of mind, and the Irish love a spark with mettle in him. But his conduct since he departed for Glas-aitch-é was on many sides disapproved as shady. The Viceroy openly showed his mean opinion of him. His tenants had protested by injuring his cattle and destroying his crops. He was proud, was Shane, as well as naturally reckless, and was fond of notoriety. He resented the Viceroy's treatment, and was furious with the tenants ; and became more wrathful still with Terence, to whose ill-advised conduct he imputed his own growing unpopularity. What was the use of having mixed himself up in the odium of Tone's capture if his brother was to cut the ground from under his feet ? It was but too probable that he might whistle both for an English peerage and comforting bits in the way of sinecures ; and all because of Terence. Was it not enough to provoke a saint—much more an Irish earl, who considered himself a pauper ? Lord Cornwallis was unkind and rude. My Lord Glandore complained of his uncivil treat-

ment to Lord Clare. The chancellor, with an eye to business, soothed his *amour-propre*, and roundly told the Viceroy in private that he must constrain himself to be civil to the peers. Then he broke ground to Shane with reference to the union, explaining that he might put himself quite right if he would work with the executive in this matter. He must promise his vote in the House of Lords and all his influence in the Commons, and then his gracious Majesty would doubtless give substantial proofs of his approval. Shane promised that he would follow this worldly-wise advice. As my Lord Clare so cogently observed, the union was arranged—was to all intents and purposes a *fait accompli*. Lord Glandore's influence could not prevent the end, even if that peer should elect to be disinterested. What a lack of common prudence would he show then, if for a crotchet he should bar himself out of Tom Tiddler's ground! His brother's ruin showed the result of crotchets. There would be fine pickings. The Chancellor gave his word as to that, adding at the same time that the man is a fool who strains at gnats. Shane therefore was as easily talked over as many another of his order. Lord Clare was quite certain about the success of his project, but thought that it would perhaps be well to sound my lady in order that she might not through inadvertence undo his work.

Now, as we know, she had lived the life of a re-

cluse, looking at political events, in most cases, through the chancellor's spectacles, half-awakened now and then by the diatribes of Mr. Curran. But she thought his web was a wicked piece of work when now he displayed its woof to her; and objected strongly to his design of mixing her firstborn in his scheming. It was grievous to her that the dear dark wool of the dusky sheep should be further blackened. My lady got rid of her importunate old friend by saying she would speak to Shane as to the using of his influence; and, left alone, sat wondering what she ought to do. It was a bitter thing to think of the proud name being held up to obloquy. Yet there were reasons why valuable tit-bits must not be refused idly by the idol of her heart. If only that old abortive project could be carried out! If only Shane was safely married to his cousin! Was it too late to make another effort? My lady perceived dimly that Shane was repelled by the damsel—and no wonder. The passions of this earth seemed gone, burnt away, consumed, by the action on her mind of past events. Doreen sat on a heap of ashes, enclosed in a rarified atmosphere of her own. But, for all that, another trial must be made; matters were becoming desperate; my lady began to fear that she was not strong enough to fight against Heaven. She would see Shane, and speak very seriously to him forthwith.

It was no easy matter now to get hold of Shane.

Since his return to Dublin he had plunged deeper and deeper into excess—partly from having been mewed up so long, partly to drown the voice of the inner monitor, partly because of the forbidding chilliness of his own fireside and the presence there of his gloomy brother. The Blasters, who during the reign of terror had been busy with the triangles; the Cherokees, who had been dispersed about the country with their regiments, returned now to the capital, to sit for the last time in the Irish Parliament, by order of the chancellor; and glorious were the nights they passed together whilst awaiting the decisive moment. The hounds of Strogue were brought again into requisition. My lord and his boon companions amused themselves with cub-hunting—careering with wild shrieks across the land—past cabins, the shoulders of whose occupants were disfigured with livid weals—past huts whose inmates cursed the cavalcade as it swept by. They rode all day. They drank and fought all night. My lady had to bide her time in order to lay hands upon her son. Verily, it seemed little probable that his infatuated lordship could be induced, even by her entreaties, to pull up in full career for the sake of wooing the cousin who frightened him!

As though in furtherance of the unrelenting measures of Heaven, both sons were received now as guests at the Little House, and equally insulted their parent by making no secret of going there.

The scraping of their feet was visible on the wall which divided the two properties. My lady could not but admit that Fate took pleasure in deliberately thwarting her arrangements. Why, when so many Catholics came to ruin in the Hurry, was this horrible woman allowed to escape scot-free? After she had been caught in the act, too, of harbouring traitors! Was it that through her (the only one on earth who had power to do so) the secret she kept so hungrily should be blabbed forth upon the housetops? Sure, a mark of Fate's finger could be detected here. But my lady was all the more determined to be obstinate. She would go on scheming, and wrestle with all her puny strength, shaking her broken spear-haft till finally put out of misery. If Fate was resolved to kill her, she would die hard, fighting to the very last.

Terence, being free—on parole—moped about the Abbey, never moving beyond its boundaries, save when he went to the Little House to converse with its kind hostess. His life was finished, although he was not destined to wing away at present. The reprieve brought to him no rapture, much as his heart was touched by the devotion of poor Phil. He was like one who has passed through the anguish of drowning; who has subsided into the ecstatic state, made beautiful by coloured lights, which precedes dissolution. Like those who have been at this point plucked from the waters, he returned with

reluctance to the world, conscious only of its pain and trouble. After the first short shock of astonishment, which set his head reeling, he experienced nothing but unalloyed regret, although the mere fact of life is intoxicating to the young. His peace was made with his Maker. He had been privileged to look through the Golden Gate, only to be thrust cruelly back again into the darkness of this world. Had he but followed Theobald's example, all would have been over now—he would be walking with his brother patriots in Paradise. He was satisfied that his life would be of no further use. He saw little of his mother—as little as possible, indeed, for on his arrival from Kilmainham she had tendered a frigid hand in a way that brought tears into his eyes. My lady's attempt to appear glad was rendered heart-rending by its ill-success. Was it her fault if her affections were so engrossed by Shane that there was no corner left for Terence? He saw through the little mummery at once, and avoided her without stopping to seek for reasons; and she, on her side, was relieved, for every fibre of energy within her was strung now for the unequal contest with Fate on Shane's behalf, which she perceived with prophetic ken to be inevitable.

Curran and Sara stayed on at the Abbey, to the satisfaction of the inmates, whose skeletons rattled with less deafening jangle in the presence of strangers. Doreen was glad of Sara for a nurse.

My lady, who always liked Curran, and who was being crushed into humility by impending Nemesis, was sorry to see how aged he was, and hoped that the quiet of the Abbey might do for him what it might never do for her. He lingered on to see the most of Terence, declaring that, the union passed and the prisoners gone, he would turn his back on the land he had loved too well, and crave six feet of earth from the United States. He trotted up and down the alleys of the rosary with his ex-junior, the hearts of both too full for speech. They would part soon, never again to meet in this world. They had been involved in dangers and supreme soul-conflicts, which knit hearts together more closely than a decade of conventional maundering. Both had been sorely tried, and had come out the better for the fire. The tenderness the twain felt one for the other was that of two strong natures, generous and pure—an equable, staunch tenderness, swayed by no violent passion, founded on the sure basis of esteem and confidence, such as may never be attained in any love of man for woman.

This was the attitude of the two friends one to the other, in the interval that preceded the day which was to decide the fate of Ireland. Doreen was too ill to see any one. The orders of the doctor were stringent as to the necessity of extreme quiet for her. Sara issued forth now and again with bulletins ; then returned to her post. Madam

Gillin bearded the tigress in her lair by sending openly to inquire after the invalid. One morning Sara, neglecting her patient, came tripping forth, well rolled in furs, with unseemly gladness in her face—unseemly levity in her demeanour :

‘What *do* you think, papa?’ she said, flinging her arms round Mr. Curran. ‘I’ve got a letter to say he’s coming home!’

‘*He?* To whom do you refer?’ demanded her father, who declined to admit that for his child there was but one ‘he.’

‘Robert, of course!’ she replied, with shy reproach. ‘Do read!’

Her father read, then handed the note to Terence gloomily. The maid had her gladness to herself. It was not a wise letter; one written evidently by an enthusiastic but rash person, who, having been absent during the Hurry, could put faith still in the mirage of Irish freedom; who had not laid to heart the awful lesson of the year that was expiring. He spoke with indignation of the way he was duped in London; of the impossibility of getting at his Majesty, who was as inaccessible to him as any potentate of Old Japan. For months he was kept dallying in ante-chambers, he complained. His funds would have failed but for good Lord Moira. But now he was coming back to receive the mantle of Theobald, which intuition told him was to fit his shoulders; to bid farewell to brother Tom ere he

departed; then to study the ground with a fresh eye.

Her father looked at Sara, as he pushed the blonde cocoons from off her bright young forehead. Blind girl to be so glad; she who before was more wisely jubilant in that her lover should be removed from danger. Her delight, indeed, was infantine and unalloyed; for all day long the patriots were declaring that everything was lost, that all was over. There was no reason, then, why she should look forward to future complications.

‘Use all the power you have, my Primrose,’ he adjured his daughter, with sad earnestness, ‘to keep him away yet awhile. The mantle of Theobald, forsooth! We know that it is red and clammy. The shamrock must be transplanted to another soil. Tell him not to come, I say. So soon as the ship sails for Fort George, you and I will go and meet him in London.’

Sara seemed bewildered, as the smile faded from her face. What could her parent mean? Sure, it was but natural to come and take a last look at a beloved brother ere he went away? Whatever Robert’s intentions were, she knew that they were good and noble. The mantle of Theobald meant love of motherland—no more. Everybody was painfully convinced that the time for armed resistance was gone and past; that England held the reins well in hand, and meant to hold them.

The excitement when the grand day arrived was great in Dublin, while the provinces looked on with unconcern. The brew of my Lords Castlereagh and Clare had cost them sleepless nights. The Viceroy, as head-cook, made believe to supervise, but he held a perfumed kerchief to his august nose; there was no need for special exertion on his part, for his deputies were by this time familiar with the receipt. By the middle of the ensuing year at latest, every detail would be arranged; and then he would be able to depart, his mission accomplished, out of an atmosphere that poisoned him. But my Lords Clare and Castlereagh were only bunglers after all. They had not fathomed the baseness of the senate—the yawning depth of its abyss of greed. Certain members of both Houses turned round at the last minute. Some said that their consciences smote them; others admitted that their rapacity was not satisfied. After a sitting of twenty-one hours the measure was lost; and my Lords Clare and Castlereagh, baffled where success seemed certain, looked foolish.

Every one was disgusted. Lord Cornwallis apologised for the muddle to the British Cabinet. Odd straitlaced people, he explained, rose all of a sudden to the surface, who, if they had appeared sooner, might have done much to stop the ball. It was like the legend of Sodom and Gomorrah. ‘Peradventure three righteous men might be found,’

and so on. The affair would have to be postponed for a few months in order that the three righteous men might be tampered with. Of course the three righteous men had their price. My Lord Powerscourt had emerged from his Wicklow mountains to protest from his place against the sinful measure, and a shamefaced knot rallied round him—a nucleus of lords who objected to the bartering of freedom against a cartload of cheap mirrors and bead-necklaces. But retribution fell upon that ill-advised Lord Powerscourt before the setting of the sun that day. A national rabble who sallied forth from the Liberties to wreak vengeance on those who dared to vote for union, by a trifling error attacked Powerscourt House in William Street, and broke its windows and smashed its sculptured ornaments. They did not desist till some one explained that it appertained to a peer who all along had steadfastly set his face against the orgies of his fellows; against bloodshed, murder, and torture; and against Lord Clare. But, arrah! what was broke could be mended, and it was good for trade. Three cheers for Lord Powerscourt! He must acknowledge the warmth of Pat's nature, and make the best of the mistake.

Terence learned with heartfelt satisfaction, mingled with surprise and contrition in that he had wronged his brother so, that Lord Glandore had not voted with Government. My lady, he knew, was

shocked with the entire proceeding. Perchance to her influence was this happy result due? Be that as it might, the heart of the younger was drawn towards his brother. They never cared much for each other—they looked on the world from a different standpoint. Since the Hurry, a marked coldness and spitefulness was evident in Shane's demeanour. But he was not so bad as he seemed, or so selfish, Terence assured himself. At all events he was repentant—regretted doubtless the part he played with reference to Theobald, though too haughty to admit it. He, Terence, was going away so soon—never, in all probability, to look upon Ireland or his family again—that it behoved him to carry as few regrets as might be to his prison. He must bid adieu to the world with a clear conscience—at enmity with no man, least of all his brother. He resolved to make the first advance to Shane; to congratulate him on his conduct even at this eleventh hour—to exhort him to resist temptation 'twixt this and the next attempt—to beg him to take care that he, though the measure would of course be carried sooner or later, was in nowise mixed up with the Iscariots. To this laudable end he strove to throw himself upon his elder's path, and met him face to face in the stable-yard on the very next day after the first failure.

Shane tried to avoid the gloomy *trouble-fête*, but finding that impossible, came forward with as *de-*

bonair a swagger as a racking headache and impaired digestion would permit. His aspect spoke more of claret and its effects than of repentance. The coat of cream-coloured cut velvet that he wore was rent in several places; two of the filigree gold buttons had been wrenched away; his satin pantaloons were smirched with dirt; his handsome face was inflamed and bloated. What a contrast between the brothers now! Their characteristics seemed inverted from those which marked them in former days. Then Terence had shown too much of the florid farmer, too much of the bovine contented animal breadth which men exhibit who live much in the open air and look on cattle. Then nothing could be more refined and elegant than Shane—with his miniature figure, his faultless limbs and tiny hands, his clean-cut features whereon sat the expression of command which marks a man for one to whom authority is an undisputed birth-right. Now the pair had changed places. Shane's lineaments were losing their fine lines by reason of sucking at a bottle; the look of command was departing with his self-respect: whilst Terence, in a dress of studied simplicity, as upright and square as usual, had assumed a carriage of reserved haughtiness. His locks had lost their brilliant colour, so had his cheeks, through care. That silvery sheen from the other world still glittered in his eye. The rollick of exuberant good-humour and enjoyment of life

was exchanged for a sober melancholy. His voice even was lowered a semitone. His individuality had slipped into the minor key.

‘Shane,’ he said, ‘I am so very glad, old fellow. I should have felt it sorely if you had espoused this measure. Of course it’s not my business to try to direct your opinions; but now that it’s all over for the present, I can’t help telling you I’m glad.’

Shane passed across his throbbing temples a hand which was soiled with the dust of last night’s cards, and shrank backward from his brother’s advance. ‘You are a nice one,’ he sneered, ‘to direct my opinions. *You*—who but for an accident would have danced the minuet like a peasant! We’ve been starting a new club—the Blazers—two days and nights! I’m losing my nerve. This won’t do. Too young to be so shaky. I’ll go to bed.’

He endeavoured to escape. His two pet pointers, Eblana and Aileach, came bounding towards him with yelps which woke the echoes of the yard. Terence felt that there was a mistake somewhere. His brother was upon his guard, as though he expected to be reviled.

‘Am I wrong, Shane?’ he cried, as the blood bubbled to his face. ‘You didn’t—did you vote with Government yesterday?’

‘What if I did, *Croppy*?’ was my lord’s surly rejoinder.

Terence winced. ‘Do not use harsh words,’ he

implored. 'Remember that where I go my life must be passed in retrospect. Pray do not let me carry away any memories of you but kind ones.'

'Why gibe at me then?' said sulky Shane.

'I—gibe? Is it likely I should jest?'

'Yes, gibe!' repeated Shane, his anger kindling, while the cicatrice stood forth purple upon his forehead. 'You know that I've been tricked. I was at the new club among a set of merry dogs, and gave orders to a porter at the house to fetch me when I was wanted. He didn't come; I didn't vote; and when I offered just now to run him through, he pleaded that he was a follower of yours, and could not possibly do that to which you would object. You! And now you come preaching like a parson! Curse you!'

Terence was deeply moved. His own brother, then, was itching for his share of the silver pieces. It was due to accident alone that he had not disgraced himself. Lord Glandore growled out in exasperation: 'The chancellor will not speak to me!' and, raising the toy-whip he held, made as though he would strike his brother, giving at the same moment a kick which sent Eblana howling to the kennels. Terence recoiled from the threatened blow. At the same instant the lattice of my lady's chamber was flung open, and she, in the imperious voice of other days, cried, 'Shane! come here at once!'

Now the first-born whom she adored so fondly was accustomed to yield to her when in an imperious mood. He felt guilty now and out of sorts, knowing that he was desperately in the wrong. In a sneaking manner, therefore, he threw away his switch, and, kicking aside the other hound, entered his mother's presence, clasping his splitting temples with both his palms.

She was sweeping up and down as she used to do, before she took to feeble blinking in the great chair. Emotion of some kind troubled her so much that she could scarcely speak. Half frightened, Shane asked if he should fetch some water.

She shook her head and muttered 'No.' Then, finding voice, she adjured him in jerky sentences which burned her tongue, to treat his brother with kindness during the short time they could be together. 'A time may come,' she said, 'when you will bitterly regret idle taunts. Do not lay up for yourself the fruits of remorse. I have eaten of them all my life, and know what they are like.'

'What nonsense!' Shane exclaimed fretfully. 'You're always blowing bladders into balloons! Don't bother. The Croppy and I will soon part to meet no more. Then perhaps you'll put aside these foolish terrors! I think your brain is softening.'

'Foolish terrors!' wailed the countess.

After a moment of reflection she turned sharply

round as though urged by a power beyond control. 'Shane!' she cried, stretching out her arms lest he should stop her; 'oh! if you only knew what I have endured for your sake! Listen to me——' then, sinking back on the window-seat, she drew up her limbs together, murmuring in a tone of such anguish as fairly alarmed her first-born: 'No, no! I cannot! I *will* not! It is too much!'

Shane recovered his self-possession. 'The poor thing's head's deranged,' he thought; and feeling that he had been wanting in respect just now, he stooped down and kissed her as she crouched like a bundle on the cushions.

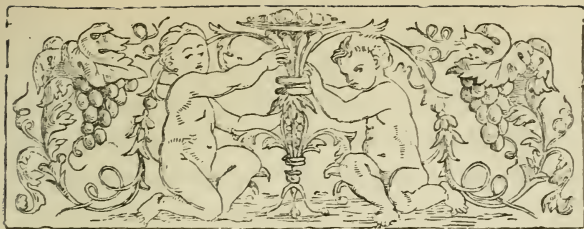
This unusual display of affection seemed to revive his mother. She twined her quivering arms about him, and, dragging him to her side, whispered: 'My darling—for my sake who have gone through sore travail on your account—oh! be kind to Terence—be very, very kind. If you knew all, you would be—but you shall never know. I will bear all myself. My hand shall never pour sorrow on your head!'

The words of mystery perplexed my lord, who, never very bright, was still confused with drink. He was about to ask questions; perceiving which my lady spoke abruptly. 'Shane,' she whispered, stroking his hair with clinging affection, 'do you know what is the fondest wish of your old mother? If I saw you well married I could die content.

When you were so infatuated with that horrid girl down yonder, you did not know what pain you gave me.'

'Why?' demanded Shane, the scar on his brow deepening in hue. 'She's a good girl, and I like her still. There's nothing against her that I'm aware of. I hate your bread-and-butter misses!' Had the young man been sober he would not have dared so to speak; but wine gave him courage to say that to which Norah urged him daily. 'I'll marry Norah if I like,' cried her stout champion. 'I know you've got some silly notion about Doreen. Why, I can't think. I don't want to marry her, and she doesn't want to marry me; and I won't do it—that's flat. Is it you or I who would marry her? I suppose I may follow my own wishes on the subject.'

His mother crouched down on the cushions again and moaned, while her first-born stopped short in wonderment. What a pother, to be sure! Her nerves must be the centre of some disease, for he had said naught to warrant such an access of pain! He could not make it out. At length, by way of applying a soothing plaster, he said: 'There, there! don't fret so. Maybe I'll die a bachelor, and the Croppy'll inherit. Will that please you? Come, sit up and smile at me.'



CHAPTER VII.

SUSPENSE.



OREEN was a fine subject, truly, for matrimonial scheming! Sara, faithful little nurse, hovered round her bed while she battled with delirium—spoke words of encouragement to Lord Kilwarden, who watched his daughter's state with grief. What was the use of all his trimming—his cautious steering—his dallying with Apollyon, if she for whose sake alone he desired wealth and titles was beyond caring for the treasures of this life? But the fond father's prayers were answered. Her splendid constitution soon brought her back to health—she was not one of those who die broken-hearted; but it was soon manifest to all who watched her that she, like Terence, looked on her life as done. She spent her time in watching the boats on Dublin Bay—aware, in hazy fashion, of Sara's prattle. She asked after

Tom Emmett and the others, as one might after old friends who are crippled for life—who are labouring under some incurable malady. Terence spent many moments of placid enjoyment, conversing with his cousin in the little bedroom which overlooked the rosary ; but neither ever spoke a word of love. The brief interval of freedom was speeding quick away. The works at Fort George were progressing rapidly. A very few weeks and the prisoners would depart, to begin a new existence in a howling wilderness. She told him her plans, with such details as he might ponder over in his solitude, promising to carry them out to the letter as a sacred duty, in order that he might calculate with certainty what she was doing at such and such an hour. The notion of taking the veil was in a calmer moment given up. What need to take the veil ? What difference could a vow make to one whose heart was dead ? Her vigorous energy must find scope ; in tending others she would forget herself. She would, thanks to Lord Kilwarden's savings, play the Lady Bountiful in Dublin, for the benefit of the sufferers from the Reign of Terror. Scarce a family of the lower class but the yeomanry had left their brand on it. Fatherless children—widowed wives—cried out from the Vale of Tears. Sure, those who were taken—who had been shot down like dogs or had perished under torture in the Riding-school—were better off than they, if their end was to be starvation in a gutter ! Lord Kilwarden murmured

that it should be as she wished. She should return and live with him in town, and do with his money as she listed. The subject of the union interested Doreen deeply. She could talk of it without rancour as a thing that was inevitable. Her life was done because that of Mother Erin was over, and of her faithful sons. So she discussed the prospects of the union as she would have discussed a funeral. Kilwarden and his child were not agreed upon the subject. Her father, after serious deliberation, was in favour of the measure, and thus expressed himself, while Curran, pretending to be buried in a book, sniffed and hemmed.

‘Events,’ he said, ‘have clearly shown how unstable is our nature. Only twenty years ago we showed a serried front, and were as one in the cause of freedom; but a little wedge was inserted—and see! To what an end we’ve come! For we have come to an end—there is no use discussing that. The one drop of satisfaction which is given to us in the goblet of gall is that an assembly will vanish into space which has reached the lowest depth of human degeneracy. Its members—as all Europe knows—consider the station they hold as a portion of private property, not as a public trust. The scorn of Lord Cornwallis is not undeserved.’

To this Curran objected with vehemence: ‘My good friend! is that a reason why your union should answer? You cannot glue two pieces of

board together unless the joint be clean. You cannot unite two men indissolubly, unless the cement be virtue. How then two countries, between which rolls a sea of blood more wide than the Atlantic?’

But Arthur Lord Kilwarden had followed events with a keen scrutiny, and none were more appalled than he at the way the senate had jiggled to my Lord Clare’s piping. ‘Whichever way,’ he affirmed sadly, ‘you look at the proceedings of your parliament, the sight is equally distressing. If the English parliament could be convinced that our interests are really bound up with theirs, they would come to look on us in time as part and parcel of themselves, instead of treating us like savages. Indeed, the Irish Lords and Commons are showing clearly that the English estimate of them is the right one. Practically their birthright is disposed of. It is merely a matter of terms.

Then Curran inurmured doleful things about the extinction of the Irish name and the days of the Round Towers, and the parties, as usual, agreed to differ.

There was one side of the matter which was gratifying to Doreen, namely, the conduct of her own people. The Viceroy was undisguisedly in favour of inserting in this Union Bill a clause for the abrogation of the penal statutes; but, as might have been expected, the King dashed his pen

through it. The Catholics emancipated indeed? Fiddle-de-dee! Never, while that large-minded monarch should survive. His stupidity produced a hitch. Then the Catholic lords came forward—there were but seven—and begged that state interests should be consulted before that of their own faith. The effect produced was good, for the dignity of the situation lay not with stupid George. Although they seemed to be sacrificing themselves unduly, yet they scored one in the eyes of Europe, and public opinion decided that their attitude of noble neutrality would reap its reward ere long. Doreen was glad of this, although for her part she would wish to struggle against union to the last. If it must take place, it must; but she agreed with Terence that eternal obloquy would be the portion of those who were responsible for the end. It was with dissatisfaction, then, that she listened to his tidings about Shane. It was by an accident, due to the involuntary influence of his younger brother, that he escaped degradation at the first voting? This was terrible news! The duty of the younger man was plainly written, she pointed out with a spark of her old animation. Before withdrawing to consummate his martyrdom, he must speak earnestly, seriously, to the misguided earl—implore him on his knees, if need were, not to disgrace the name which had descended unsullied from Sir Amorey. ‘If you show him,’ she said, ‘the chasm

into which he is about to fall, his better instincts will drag him back. Neither his vanity nor avarice must be played on by the chancellor for the furtherance of that wicked end.

Terence replied that not only had he no influence over his brother, but that the latter might be goaded by his interference into doing precisely that which they all deprecated, out of spite. It would be better to trust to Providence. 'How can I bid him not disgrace the family?' he concluded, gently smiling. 'Would he not retort that I have done worse than he can do, by placing my neck within the halter?'

There was something in this, certainly, Doreen admitted. But it was not a moment for petty vanity—it was a time for general humiliation. Terence must humble himself to bear meekly the taunts of Lord Glandore, content in that he was doing his duty. In the solitude of Fort George it would be a comforting episode to dwell upon—instead of brooding always over Erin's death-throes.

One evening, at this point of the discussion, which was renewed again and again before Terence could make up his mind to risk a storm, blonde Sara, who, sitting hard by, was wont to listen to pros and cons which dazed her in respectful silence, laid down her needle, and startled the disputants by saying, 'Are you quite sure that she is in her death-throes?'

Doreen patted her arm as you might that of a

precocious child, and said, with her moonlit smile, 'Have you a doubt, dear Sara?'

'I have no opinion,' responded the simple maid; 'but Robert does not think so, and he knows.'

The curiosity of her listeners was aroused. The ardent young enthusiast was about to return, in spite of Curran's wishes to the contrary, to take a last look at Tom ere he sailed away. What were these opinions of his that imparted so grandmotherly an air to the gentle Primrose?

'I've had another letter,' quoth the sapient maiden. 'He doesn't agree with you at all. Hark. He says: "Notwithstanding the darkness of our prospect, I seem to see a light. We must rise to the level of the situation, as our fathers did in '82. We are unworthy of the name of nation if by combination we cannot frustrate the Sassanagh's designs. Other and better men have pioneered the way; be mine the bright result: there shall be no union. The more I see of the English, the more I detest them. In coffee-houses they elbow me to the wall. If I were a red Indian they could not treat me and my country with greater disdain!"'

The idea that her Robert was not appreciated imbued the maid with such indignation as sat in comical fashion on her sweet, soft features. The hearts of both those who looked at her yearned towards this fragile flower. They had been strong and sturdy, yet were they utterly undone. Was

this girl to pass, too, under the yoke? Doreen, in a gush of compassion, seized her slight figure in her arms and strained it to her breast, murmuring, as she did so, ‘No, child; oh no, no! Not you too! Surely the pyre is piled high enough; the smoke of it blackens the heavens. The land is drenched; it can drink no more. Write to him, my dearest, and adjure him not to hope. Write and forbid his coming.’

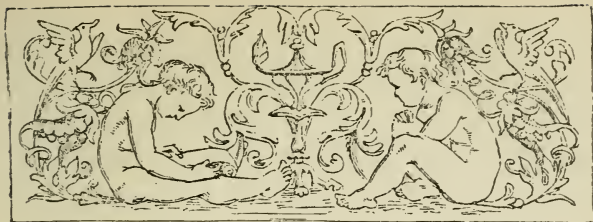
Both Terence and Doreen were painfully aware that the element of sedition was dormant, not conquered. They were convinced, too, that the struggle was useless—were ready to bow to the consummation of Lord Clare’s strategy, provided that they might stand aloof from among the traitors. If it were useless, why renew the struggle? Why help to bring upon the land again the horrors of the Hurry? Both Terence and Doreen saw through the cloak of Robert’s mysterious words, though Sara apparently did not. Yet surely he could not be so utterly distracted as to intend again to raise the standard of revolt? The whole aspect of the case was changed since ’98. Napoleon was too much bent on Continental laurels to allow France to think of Ireland. Money was scarce; merchants cautious; the people cowed. The Presbyterians were irritated by the Wexford massacre; the Catholics indignant at the supposed desertion of the northerners. A pretty time to think of flying to arms! No; Robert

could not be so mad. But what did he mean, then ? Was his combination to be a bloodless contest, such as was brought to a successful issue by the Volunteers ? Combination, forsooth ! It was not possible for Irishmen ever to combine for more than a few minutes together. Sara evidently had no notion that her Robert could imply a resort to arms, or she would not be purring in this kittenish fashion. As it was, she shook off the embrace of her dear friend, and was very angry in that she showed anxiety to keep Robert away, now that all danger to his sacred head, was past. She waxed exceeding wroth, begging to know why Doreen presumed to question Robert's wisdom ; then, scalded by her own tears, she drooped into the arms of the older girl, registering a desire to be dead—a petition with which Heaven has been wearied by natives of Ireland time out of mind.

‘ I will see to her,’ Doreen whispered. ‘ Now, do you go down, *to please me*, Terence. You will never regret having done your best to turn Glandore. If you succeed, what blessed visions will paint the walls of your prison-cell ! Go and speak seriously to Shane, for all our sakes.’

Terence pressed his cousin's hand and promised. If it was his fate to languish through a long life on the cold crags of Moray Firth, that placid air of calm, the light of those solemn eyes, should soothe him to the last upon his pilgrimage. He was

greedily laying up a store of precious memories. The time was growing very short. Orders must come very soon for that final parting. Whate'er befel, he promised himself to follow to the end his guiding star. Heaven would inspire him with words which should save his brother from himself. Doreen was right, as she always was. He strolled leisurely across to the stable-yard to inquire whether my lord had returned from hunting.



CHAPTER VIII.

EAVESDROPPING.



HE Eumenides galloped in full cry after my lady. Their quarry was run down, scrambled up and staggered on again—was near the end of the run now.

When Shane, apple of his mother's eye, gave the last unconscious stab, she bore it without wincing, and sat up and attempted a wintry smile, as he had bidden her. The goblet which, through her strength of character, she had been able to push aside during many years, was held at her lips by a ruthless hand, and must be drained. There was no help for it. She must go and grovel before the hated Gillin, and pray her in mercy to remove the obnoxious Norah. There was nothing else for it. Schemes had miscarried, plots had fallen through. What a sorry spectacle is a harried mortal in the death-grip of the hags of Até!

Even a year's absence at Glas-aitch-é had not

blurred the memory of Norah in the heart of the young prodigal. Gillin still beguiled him to the Little House—the knavish, cruel woman! What steadiness of purpose she had shown all through her relentless course! And now she was waiting in her den with cool assurance to consummate her fiendish work. What a terrible thing to have to bow down and implore mercy from this common, vulgar wretch! Would she even now, with her rival at her feet, be merciful? Or would she, with the inherent ungenerosity of a low nature, spurn and deride the victim? Be that as it might, the ordeal must be assayed. It was no use to shake the fist at serene heaven in the impotence of rage. That would in nowise mend matters, and was silly besides. My lady resolved at last to take her cup and drink the draught, since there was no avoiding it. For several days she waited, hoping against hope for a means of escape. None came. She accepted the position, put on her hood, and sallied forth on the self-same afternoon upon which Terence decided to speak out to Shane.

Madam Gillin, in her amazement, swept down the jam-pots which she was stowing in a cupboard when Norah tore breathless up the stairs to announce that a leedy was coming up the walk who was no other than the Countess of Glandore.

‘Holy Mother!’ she ejaculated. The moment was come then—at last! and the two were to speak out,

face to face. It could only be on one subject—an unpleasant interview. What could induce the countess now to strike her colours, and come of her own accord, who for years had declined to acknowledge her neighbour's existence? The haughty countess must be hard pressed indeed to humble herself in this wise. Peeping through shutter-chinks, she beheld the stately figure of my lady—as straight as an arrow, shrouded in a silken wrapper, moving slowly towards her door, and screamed out orders to Jug to get out her best gown instantly, and place some wine on the parlour table.

My lady was kept waiting for fully half an hour, while the mistress of the Little House was arranging her war-paint, during which time she had leisure to glance round the adornments of the chamber—bright, big, showy, glowing and rubicund, blatant with varnished newness—so different from the cob-webbed dignity of the black oak and tapestry at the Abbey. The ceiling was painted in the Italian style, with clouds on cerulean ether like bits of cotton-wool. The floor was thickly carpeted, the windows heavily curtained—for the judges, when they came to carouse with their gay hostess, liked what was snug and cosy. Over the chimney-piece were two portraits, side by side, at which my lady frowned—the late Lord Glandore and Norah. The woman was evidently shameless, to place my lord's portrait so *en evidence*. This long delay was, no

doubt, a premeditated insult. The original of the second portrait, conscious that it was rude of her mamma to be so long in dressing, skimmed down the stairs and banged open the door to make a good-humoured apology, but closed it quickly and retreated—the aspect of the old lady was so forbidding as she stood upright in the centre of the floor, with thin nose pinched and bent brows scowling. If the squireens of Letterkenny had been frightened by the gorgon's stony face when she strove to be gracious, how much more awful did she appear now, when grilling on the coals of humiliation.

By-and-by, with a prodigious rattle, Madam Gillin swam in and curtseyed. If there was to be a passage of arms, she was determined not to be taken at a disadvantage. Fortune had denied her the grand air which goes with blue blood and coronets, but she was resolved to make up for the want of it by a display of external magnificence. Though warm and moist with the exertion of plunging into grandeur at so short a notice, she looked mighty fine in her best red satin, made very tight and short, with a Roman emperor in cameo grinning on the high waistband, and another nodding from her hair. The ruddy tint of her mature charms vied with the ruby of the satin and the redness of the turban, and came by no means badly out of the conflict.

When arrayed in the garments of ceremony, Madam Gillin, despite the stoutness of her figure,

could be extremely dignified. With a second curtsy and a sweep round of the left foot, she bade the visitor welcome to her poor home, and pointed a mitted forefinger at a chair.

‘It’s honoured that I am entirely, by your leedyship’s condescension,’ she said, wagging the turban affably. ‘Might I offer some sherry-wine, or would your leedyship prefer clart? or a dhrop of prime poteen? The judges, bless you, prefer clart. Sure, Jug’ll bring a cake in a jiffy, for drink’s bad on an empty stomach.’

The countess responded by a freezing bow. How hard it was to begin! Yet, having come, she must needs speak out. This ungenerous foe was exaggerating her own defects with intention, in order to make the task more difficult; was pretending to believe that her neighbour had ‘dropped in’ by a friendly impulse, just to scrape a tardy acquaintance over a glass of wine. The next words of the enemy showed that it was so.

‘Your leedyship’s sons are quite old cronies here,’ she remarked. ‘They often honour my tippie, and find it good; faith, it’s the same as their dear papa used to like, poor fellow!’ Here she nodded solemnly at the portrait, lest my lady should not have noticed it. ‘And fine boys they are, though the eldest is a bit skittish. Your leedyship has reason to be proud of them—specially the younger.’

It was as the countess expected. The woman

was brutal and pitiless and devoid of shame. Each word, each movement, was an outrage, a barb hurled with studied purpose. Nothing could come of an interview begun upon these lines ; it would be better to cut it short, ere self-control was lost. My lady had not moved from her position on the centre of the floor, not choosing to notice the invitation to be seated. Gathering her wrapper close, with a haughty movement of white fingers, she said abruptly, as she turned to go :

‘ Woman ! I have lowered myself in order to conjure you to consider what you do. You have harmed me, Mrs. Gillin, as much as you could ever since I first set eyes on you, although I never did you hurt. You robbed me of my husband, and flaunted your prize all over Dublin, and I bore my cross without a word, because one may not touch pitch without being one’s self defiled. You encouraged my second son in his folly ; pushed him down the incline till you nearly brought him to the gallows ; and now you are determined, if you can, to bring young Glandore to ruin. You are a devil—not a woman ! Hate me, if you will, for I would prefer your hatred to your friendship ; but surely you cannot hate *him*, or you would not hang his portrait there. Even if he did you any wrong, of which I am ignorant, forbear to wreak vengeance on his children. I never understood your motives. What can you gain by compassing all this mischief ?’

‘Whom did you say I wished to bring to ruin?’ sneered the scarlet lady, unabashed.

The pale face of the countess flushed crimson, and she proceeded as if the words stuck in her throat:

‘This hideous marriage must be prevented; you know why as well as I do. Think of the wreck to which you would bring these innocent lives. Remember, at least, that the girl is your own child, poor thing. Feel pity for her, if you can summon none for the other.’

‘I have as much pity for my child as you for yours!’ Madam Gillin retorted, with meaning. ‘When his neck was in danger, you never stirred a finger-nail.’

My lady stopped at the door to make one more effort.

‘You have deliberately brought those two together, though I have strained every nerve to keep them apart. Dare you stand by and see them married?’

‘If the childer like each other, faix, it’s not me as’ll spoil the fun!’ returned her tormentor.

My lady groaned and made as if she would speak again, but Mrs. Gillin’s fat back was turned; she was improving the position of the cameos, by means of a mirror on the wall.

Lady Glandore adjusted her hood on her white hair, and moved swiftly, with bowed head, away from the Little House; while Madam Gillin, de-

taching her gorgeous turban, turned quickly round with a grin, so soon as she was fairly gone, and watched her from behind a shutter. The good lady was troubled in her mind, and stood staring down the walk, as the grin faded, long after the muffled figure had departed. At length she clapped the errant comb into its place upon her head, and murmured :

‘I’m a devil, not a woman, am I ? Sure that cap fits best on your own pate. Rather than speak out, you’d let that lad be whipped off to Fort George, would you ? Just as you would have let him be hanged—mother without a heart ! It’s Lucifer’s pride ye have, every ha’porth of it. Well, my lips have been closed long enough.’ Then, nodding to the picture over the chimney-piece, she added aloud : ‘ Have I kept my word with ye ? Ye wished it all set right, bad man, when Satan pinched ye. Who was it that was always bidding ye to see to it yourself, and ye wouldn’t ? And her pride is as great as yours. Never fear ; it shall be set right by me ; for I like the boy for himself as well as for my oath. Before the sun’s set I’ll go to Ely Place and tell my Lord Clare something that’ll astonish him.’

‘ Tell him what, mamma ? ’ asked Norah, who was dying to learn what had taken place.

‘ Never mind, child ! ’ grunted madam, as she squeezed the impudent young lady’s peachen cheek.

‘What d’ye think that stiff old bag-o’-bones said just now? That I didn’t love my girl; and that I’d do her wanton harm.’

‘She lied!’ retorted prompt Norah.

‘Faith, ye’re right!’ agreed her mother, with a smacking kiss. ‘Order round the shay, and come and help me to take off my toggery.’

My lady sped rapidly away. The ordeal—short and sharp—more bitter even than she dreamed—was over; the draught was swallowed—in vain. Gillin’s taunts had shrivelled her soul like branding-irons. It behoved her to arrange her features before returning to the Abbey, lest some one should detect the troubled aspect of the chatelaine and make guesses at its cause, which might possibly come near the truth. As courage failed and resolution waned, her secret struggled the harder to come forth. With the self-consciousness of guilt she seemed to feel it emblazoned on her forehead, where all who ran might read.

Instead of returning by the grand drive which was but at the distance of a stone’s-throw, she followed the main road, skirted the wall that bounded her rival’s grounds, and re-entered Strogue from the back, by the wooden postern which gave access to the rosary.

The thrusts of the full-blown champion in red satin were few; but they went home, and smarted still. My lady’s ears tingled yet as she walked

between the tall beech hedges. We are conscious often of doing wrong, but decline to look upon our fault, and coax ourselves to disbelieve in its existence by persistently turning our attention to more pleasing objects. But when another individual, whose human voice we can't shut out, brays forth the story of the sin with trumpet clearness, we seem to wake up as to a new appreciation of its enormity, which comes like a fresh revelation of turpitude. Thus was it with my lady in this instance. She was well aware that her treatment of Terence, from the beginning, was below the level of just solicitude; that latterly, though his position as a traitor awaiting punishment had weighed her down, yet she had acquiesced, with a weakness which was itself a fault, in the prejudged sentence, and had been prepared to hear that the scrag-boy's work was done without attempting personally to move in the matter. Conscience whispered once or twice that by virtue of her rank she ought to force admittance to the Castle. Nay! that she ought to have hurried long ago to London, and have wrested her boy's life from the King's clemency; have dogged his Majesty to Weymouth; have stormed him in retirement; and have even tossed the sprats that he was frying into the flames if he took refuge in his wonted obstinacy. In a hazy way she knew all this full well. She knew, indistinctly, that the scrag-boy had become to her warped soul a har-

binger of peace ; and afraid of seeing too much on the glass which conscience held, had shut her eyes and breathed on it till the Present should become Past, and thereby irretrievable. But Gillin's words could not be shut out after so simple a fashion. She had hinted a few moments since, with scathing irony, that even if she sacrificed her own child in cold blood on the altar of Nemesis, her conduct would be no worse than my lady's had been to her second son. And my lady's conscience echoed the speech with loud applause. She looked now straight into her own heart, and was appalled at what she saw there ; she hearkened to the upbraidings of the monitor, and admitted that his reproaches were deserved—that even the travail of an embittered life was not an atonement sufficient for its crime.

It is an awful moment when a nature built on pride begins to crumble. The crash follows swiftly on the warning. Extremes tumble together ; the loftier the edifice the more complete its collapse. The upbraidings of the monitor—harsh, unrelenting, awfully distinct—dinned in my lady's ears as she paced with muffled head between the hedges of the rosary. Presently she heard a murmur. No ! That was not conscience. Those were human voices—the voices of her sons—arguing in a high key. Great heavens ! they were quarrelling.

With a stealthy step, holding her mantle in close folds lest its rustle should betray the pre-

sence of an eavesdropper, she stole along under the lofty hedge.

Shane was in his hunting-suit. He was surrounded by his hounds. They sniffed about and rolled on the damp grass, making their toilet in dog fashion, to clean their muddy backs. Eblana and Aileach sat on their hams gazing at their master with wistful heads poised on one side. Shane stood facing his mother, who marked that the muscles of his face were twitching, while his limbs shook with passion. Terence had his back to her—a tall, quiet figure, distinct against a faded sky which was faint with the glare of a departed sun. His broad, square shoulders stood out distinctly from a light background of misty hedge, of blotted, translucent pink, and pale yellow, and blue-green, across which streamed a troop of darkling phantoms—crows cawing off to roost.

Shane's hunting-whip sawed the air, as he passed it from one nervous hand to the other. He was always so ready with his whip. It seemed as much as he could do to withhold its sinuous thong from off his brother. Terence was speaking. My lady held her breath to listen.

'I speak to you as from the grave,' he said. 'My life is done. A week or two at most, and my place will be vacant—my shadow will darken the threshold of my ancestors no more. Take care, my brother! When you look on my empty seat let the

sad memory of me be precious on your hearth, untarnished by regret. You are the head of the house. Do not forget the responsibilities to which you are born. Look at the tapestry in the drawing-room, and follow the example of your fathers. Do your duty by them ; be without fear and without reproach. Do not earn for yourself among the family pictures an empty frame from which posterity shall have wrenched the portrait.'

'Peace ! I will not bear your prosing !' hissed the young earl. 'You are no better than a felon. You've wrecked yourself through your own folly, and now would inflict your broken-backed morality on me. I told you once you were no better than a "half-mounted." Ye're not so good. As for your insolent advice, *that* for it ! I'll tell you this much, to set your mind at rest. I've made it up with my Lord Cornwallis by explaining that the mistake was due to you. I've pledged my own vote to Government, and all the influence that I can bring to bear. Two of the boroughs I hold will be disfranchised, in return for which I am to have money down.'

'Oh, remember !' broke in Terence. 'That it's blood-money, which carries a curse with it. That it will come out of Irish coffers. By a refinement of barbarity it is Erin who will have to pay the ruffians who will slay her !'

'Pooh !' retorted Shane, with a finger-snap.

‘Whatever your worship’s views may be, I *will vote for union*—there ! Not that it can signify to you one way or t’other, so soon as you have been carted off to Scotland.’

‘Then after this,’ returned Terence, with hot reproach, ‘you should quarter an auctioneer’s hammer with the arms of old Sir Amorey ; since, like a superannuated chest of drawers, you are to be knocked down to the lowest bidder !’

My lady could endure the spectacle no longer of her two sons threatening each other in the gloaming with swollen veins, face close to face. With a ghostly sigh which startled the disputants she hurried towards the house. The brothers searched but found no one, and cast uneasy glances at each other. What was it ? Could it be the banshee—messenger of ill ?

Terence, regretting his sharp speech, strode with abrupt strides away, lest he might be provoked to still more regrettable discourse, across the little flower-plot, past the sun-dial, through the hall, to his own chamber, wherein he locked himself, among the guns and fishing-rods ; while Shane, who was athirst, followed more slowly, like a shepherd with his flock, and turned into the dining-room in search of drink.

Now Miss Wolfe, whose bedroom, it will be remembered, overlooked the flower-plot, and was opposite to the dining-room, was sitting at her

window awaiting Terence's return with tidings of a successful ambassage. Of course Shane would be persuaded to see the error of his ways, and agree not to vote with Government. She was no little surprised to behold my lady, usually so majestic, hurry in a scared manner through the golden grille; then Terence; then Shane with all his hounds about him. Something was afoot; what could have happened? All three seemed strangely troubled. No! It was but a coincidence exaggerated by the distorted fancy of a convalescent into something serious. She was about to close the curtains when she was further astonished by seeing my lady rush into the dining-room with frantic gestures and fall prostrate on the ground before her son. She saw Lord Glandore turn round and try to raise his mother, but she only wrung her hands and wept, while her lips moved quickly. Two lighted candles were on the table; the winter evening was shadowing in with a blue glamour; the small flower-plot was packed with hounds that sniffed about with uneasy muzzles, for Shane had slammed-to the golden grille after him and forgotten them.

What were they talking about down there?—only some burning question could engross them thus. It was more than the curiosity of a daughter of Eve might resist. Snatching up a cloak Doreen stole downstairs, out into the garden, hushing the dogs

in a whisper that their noisy greetings might not betray her presence.

My lady's subdued words came dimly to her through the glass. She cowered close to the window, nursing Eblana's head in her lap with furtive pats, for that pampered beast was importunate in his demonstrative caresses, and whined a protest against neglect. What my lady said sent a sharp thrill through Miss Wolfe. Forgetting all caution in astonishment, she rose and pressed her scared face against the pane, but mother and son were too fully occupied to heed any but themselves, as my lady poured forth at last the pent-up gall which had poisoned a life of promise, and her helpless first-born sat in a stupor, thunder-struck.

'Do not curse your old mother !' my lady implored, with a humility which jarred upon his nerves. 'Have pity on her that she should have to tell her shame. I would gladly have gone to the tomb as your father did, carrying my secret—I would have hugged it close for your sake. But the hand of God is heavy on me—it will out ! You must know the truth—alas, alas !—even if you curse me ! It was not my fault—indeed it was not—it was all your father's ; and he went to his rest, whilst I remained to bear the penalty. He carried me off ; you know that much. He was a member of the abduction-club. Placing me in a coach with a scarf about my mouth, he threatened me with a pistol if

I should let down the glass and scream. Then I was borne away to Ennishowen, to the islet of Glas-aitch-é. Oh, Shane! I endured the pang of living there again for your sake—do not judge me harshly! We dwelt there a year, then returned to Dublin to assume our position in society. We were married in the blue bedroom by the parson of Letterkenny; but, Shane, it was not my fault! Your father was fierce as you are—you are his image, but more unstable. I was as an infant under his iron will; how could I resist him? The parson of Letterkenry married us—*the night before we came back to Dublin.*'

My lady buried her face in her thin hands and sobbed, while Shane looked on. He could not comprehend.

Finding that her son said no kind word to ease the bitter task, his mother went on in a hoarse voice—even and unbroken now by sobs—with eyes fixed doggedly upon the ground.

'I implored him—oh! how I implored him—again and again, I did indeed—to send for the parson before your birth. He was reckless. At length he seemed touched by my distress, and sent. The parson was laid up with gout, but promised to be with us on the morrow. Then—it was too late—and my lord put it off again, saying that it didn't matter, and that nobody would know. I hoped that he was right, and was comforted. When, six years

later, Terence was born, the case was altered. We both saw it—alas ! too late ; he felt it as much as I. But after all, you were the first-born—a ceremony delayed could not alter that. It was not fair that you should suffer for what was but an act of negligence. We discussed the matter anxiously, and my lord decided to bury the secret. No one would suspect, or think to examine the date of the register, if we agreed to hold our peace. We never spoke of it—never—but we saw it in each other's eyes ; and from that moment I lost his love—he was always looking with regret on Terence in a way which maddened me, while I clung to you. You were the child of sorrow. I suffered much for you on that accursed island ; and then that—that woman cast her meshes over him. My lord changed his mind before he died—desired me to noise the tale abroad to all the world. I could not—my pride revolted—and my love for you. None knew the secret except one—that harlot !—my lord was faithless in that as in all other things !'

My lady's voice died away, as a host of grim recollections crowded on her memory. Presently she looked up in alarm, for Shane had made no comment. The cicatrice upon his brow stood out. She put forth her hands ; he seized her by the wrists and flung her down. Without resistance she sank moaning backwards on the floor. Turning on his seat, he poured out a tumblerful of wine and drank

it off; then—the whole truth breaking at last upon his slow intellect—he tore his hair, growling, and smote himself upon the head, and staggered round the room with reeling steps. Doreen did not try to hide herself, she was transfixed with wonder; yet though she showed like a vision in hoar-frost, impressed upon the casement, he saw her not. He was only aware that there was another Lord Glandore—who would return his contumely with interest—that his own portion was beggary and a bend-sinister. No wonder if the phantom of this new prospect churned and curdled his besotted brain.

‘He’ll hate me and take my property and title!’ he muttered through his teeth again and again, in querulous cadence. ‘What’s to become of *me*—what’s to become of *me*? I might as well be shot as beggared.’

My lady rose from the floor, haggard and gaunt, and passed her long fingers through her hair. The selfish cruelty of him for whose sake she had gone through the torture was better for her than kindness would have been. A little sympathy and she would have become hysterical. Like a sharp fillip, it strung her nerves. That from which she had shrunk so long was here in all its accumulated fulness. Well! it was part of a penance; so much was past that the remainder could matter little.

‘Not so,’ she said mournfully; and Shane, cling-

ing to a reed, returned to his seat and drew her towards him.

‘The secret may rest where it is,’ she continued, placing a loving hand upon his head. ‘No one living knows of it save you and I and—and that woman. If she meant to speak, she would have spoken long since. It may come out some day, and Terence will claim what the law will call his own, and possibly revenge himself on you for having kept him unwittingly from its enjoyment. But you shall not be brought to beggary. Alas! my deary, you are unfitted to battle with the world. Two things must be done—and done at once—betide afterwards what may. You must marry Doreen. She is an heiress, and the only one available. Your own mode of life has kept others from your path, though you might have chosen among hundreds. Her father would be glad, I know, and she is too much broken by recent afflictions to offer resistance when strong pressure is brought to bear on her.’

‘Government has offered me forty-five thousand pounds for my vote and influence in the coming contest,’ Lord Glandore observed presently, with a sinister smile. ‘It is imminent. If Croppy can only be kept in the dark till then!’

My lady bent down and kissed him, while lines of anxious thought gathered round her mouth. She was in the slough—up to the neck—out of

which it was impossible to struggle. Under happier auspices she would have recoiled from the suggestion of cold-blooded barter. But helpless Shane's position must be assured by hook or crook while there was yet time. It struck his mother that Gillin—when she should discover that her outrageous designs for Norah were foiled—might blab the secret as a last shaft of vengeance. She determined that for the present, at least, the odious creature must be humoured for prudence' sake. It was with a dreary sort of satisfaction that she found her turbulent favourite was become suddenly so malleable. What signified the unsullied shields of departed Crosbies? Unblemished honour will not renew exhausted tissues. It is well for those to prate who have never been tempted. Shane, like the rest, must sell his mess of pottage at the best market—*his* so long as it was not claimed. Then the idea flashed upon my lady as she meditated, 'Terence is marked out for an arch-traitor. He was not convicted—yet is he sentenced. If his claims were to be admitted now, his property (as that of one attainted) would be forfeit to the state! Better far that Shane should keep it.' Scruples were manifestly absurd. A brilliant suggestion of the devil this—which went far to reconcile my lady to existing circumstances.

There was silence between mother and son. The thoughts of both were best left unspoken. Both

were absorbed in their own dreams. Eblana's cold muzzle awoke Doreen from her reverie. She glided up the steps into the hall, crept with caution past the door of the dining-room, made for the young men's wing, where, in his own nest, Terence was brooding in despondency over his blank future.

He had nothing wherewith to reproach himself. Nothing! Of that he was quite certain. It had been his duty to lay the question of union clearly before his brother, who, as head of the house, must adjudicate thereon upon his own judgment. The responsibility lay with him. Whichever way he chose to act, no dishonour could accrue to the younger from his decision, so long as he, Terence, had first registered his private protest. Shane had been most insulting—had stooped even to mock at his brother's deplorable condition. But that was of no moment. When we stand upon life's brink we can afford to condemn the foolish lapping of the waves. It mattered not a rush what Shane might say or think. Yet that scene in the rosary was not one of the rainbow-hued visions which were to fresco into warmth the cold walls of his prison-cell at Fort George. Knowing his brother's temper, it would have been more wise not to kick against the pricks. Perhaps, situated as Terence was, he would have done better not to speak at all—but it is difficult in the prime of life and manhood to accept at once your position as a corpse.

The handle of his door was turned and shaken. It was an agitated hand that shook it—a woman's hand—for his hearing, sharpened by excitement, detected the sough of silk, the unsteady grope of fingers fumbling above a handle's usual place. His heart beat fast. Was the yearning of his soul to be gratified? Was it his mother, who, so cold and forbidding hitherto, had selected the long wintry interval previous to the last meal of the day to come and whisper with kisses of how she loved and pitied him?

He turned the key. To his surprise Doreen, who entered swiftly, double-locked the door, and, tossing away her mantle, stood before him with a smile upon her lips, which he had supposed was gone for ever. Her bosom heaved as she held out her two brown hands to him.

'Terence, it's *you* who are Lord Glandore!' she panted. 'Shane repulsed you when you spoke to him. I know it! He is ready to accept their blood-money; he is scheming basely for it at this moment; but he shall be exposed in time. It is your duty to turn the bastard out!'

Terence deemed that his star had left its course; for she stood, like a distracted dark Ophelia, on the verge of laughter and of tears; dashing the drops from her cheek with one hand, while the other crept shyly into her cousin's and remained there.

She told him quickly all she had heard and seen

—all that was made plain by the light of what she heard and saw. She told him, with disdainful lip, of how her cousin had repulsed the whitehaired suppliant; how he had whined, complaining; how his mother, fortified by that engrossing love—transfigured, ennobled by it despite her sin—had risen from her knees like a queen to comfort him.

Terence listened—one leg crossed over the other to support his elbow, while his chin rested on his hand—and instead of joining in her exultant joy, he only grew more gloomy. What was this will-o'-the-wisp that railed in such foolish fashion? At *him* whose heart was dead, whose career was done, upon whom the gate of a lifelong prison was about to close, who was too weary to be very sorry for his own undoing? Silly will-o'-the-wisp, who, clad in siren-guise, thought thus to lure him back to love of life! He listened to Doreen's narrative in moody thought, plucking no consolation thence. It was a poignant subject of regret that her usually incisive common-sense should be bewitched by this vulgar tempter. After all, a woman's judgment may never be relied on. It must be his office, then, to rebuke her folly, and show where his true duty lay.

A great love, indeed—a sublime love! A love which is a crown of glory, but which was in this instance a wreath doomed to be wasted on the sterile rock. Shane cared for no one but himself.

Was inclined even to spurn this love—nay, had dared brutally to repulse it, because it could not accomplish impossibilities. Not a drop from the precious phial had ever leaked out for Terence—not a single drop. And he would have prized it so! Yet was his duty carved plainly out; and with the gaze of one who belongs to another world, he saw it—through foliage and matted briars—with clear vision.

‘It appears that I might perhaps save our name,’ he said slowly, while he nursed his knee, ‘from being mixed up with those of the recreants. What is the price? Reflect, dear Doreen! If we were not beyond the influence of mundane hopes and longings, would you advise me to act thus? Would you——’

‘Can there be any doubt?’ cried impetuous Doreen, with flashing eyes. ‘Did we not agree this very afternoon that Shane must be worked on not to disgrace his lineage. Now it is in your hands. Surely you could not——’

‘Hush, hush, my dearest!’ Terence responded gently. ‘Remember that we are to lay up no store of evil memories! At Fort George I am to think of you as the star that has guided my thoughts upward. Reflect calmly now! In order that Shane—poor misguided fellow!—may not drag us into the ranks of the Iscariots, I should have to make good my rights before the world. To accomplish that, I

should have to brand with obloquy my mother's fair fame, which in the world's eyes is spotless. Should I thus keep untarnished the honour of the Crosbies? No! The question of Ireland's fate is in God's keeping, not in ours. His decrees seem hard to our purblind vision, yet must we bow to them. Forget what you discovered. Let this be as though it had never been.'

The girl's colour went and came; she looked earnestly at her cousin, as with prosaic action he nursed his knee.

'You are right,' she murmured at length. 'Do you know, my love, that I dared to despise you once? I said you could never be a hero!'

'Hero!' Terence echoed, with a laugh. 'I have looked into the other world too closely to care now for this. We have passed through the fire, Doreen, have we not? and bear its traces on our flesh. God grant that it has purged away the worser part from both of us!'



CHAPTER IX.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SACRIFICE.



ADAM GILLIN called many times at Ely Place in her anxiety to astonish the chancellor, but failed to find him—for the best of all reasons, that he was not there. Again and again she rapped with the big brass knocker—always to receive the same answer, ‘His lordship is in England.’ Time was moving on ; reports arrived in succession that the works at Fort George were progressing ; that they were well-nigh finished ; that they were complete. The unhappy exiles would be drafted off directly, and Madam Gillin was determined to astonish Lord Clare before that moment came. What on earth could he be doing in England ? He was an Irishman, if a bad one, and ought to stop at home. She was on the point of packing up a valise to pursue him across the Channel, when Jug brought the tidings that my

Lord Clare's coach was on its way to Kingstown, and that therefore its master must be expected back.

The chancellor frowned ominously when he beheld his eccentric acquaintance ensconced in his favourite chair. The butler apologised. The lady would take no denial, he explained. She had nearly worn out the knocker. He could not turn out one of the sex by neck and shoulders. Maybe it was really something of weight that made her so persistent. But my Lord Clare was quite another man from when he went to London, and was in no mood to brook liberties. He had seen Mr. Pitt there; had, much to the amusement of that gentleman, reviled my Lord Cornwallis, his policy, and his blunt manner; had explained away the fiasco at the first voting for union, and had been graciously received. Mr. Pitt had smiled on him while Mr. Fox sneered; had hinted that if he and Lord Castlereagh did their work cleverly there would be no end to the honours which his Majesty would heap on them. They must not be discouraged, but slave away—hammer and tongs—till the object was achieved. After all, it was at this juncture merely a matter of a little tact. As an earnest of future favour, my Lord Clare was created Baron Fitzgibbon in the Peerage of England, and returned home an inch taller and three times as overbearing as he had shown himself before.

Once the union arranged, Lord Cornwallis would

depart ; Lord Clare would resume his lofty position in Irish politics, and from his new place in the English House of Lords would coerce British politicians on special subjects, as he had browbeaten a succession of British viceroys. But before this delicious dream could be realised there was much to be done, which required careful manipulation. Lord Castlereagh had kept him *au courant* during his absence of what passed in Dublin. He was aware that, fired by indignation at the breaking of the compact and the condemnation of his brother, untried, to penal servitude, young Robert had left London abruptly and gone home. The young cockatrice, as he elected to call him, meant mischief—would certainly give trouble—and at an inconvenient moment. He must be watched—bagged—gagged—swept away like a tiresome fly. It would not do to have insurrections now. He was aware that the Irish parliament—servile hitherto—was playing pranks and kicking up its heels, raising the price of its suicide, to the annoyance of Lord Castlereagh and the rage of Lord Cornwallis. He had seen a letter from the Viceroy to the Duke of Portland, wherein the former pleaded once more for the emancipation of the Catholics, declaring that if they were kept out in the cold, the important measure which was to be a new bulwark to England would have a foundation of sand ; vowing that he was sick of dirty water ; that if there was no prospect of getting out of the

country he would offer earnest prayers to Heaven for immediate death. Mr. Pitt, when he showed this letter to Lord Clare, spoke openly without mincing matters. The King was obdurate about the Catholics. Lord Clare knew that. They must be cajoled, however; led on by specious promises and then betrayed; treated in fact after the ingenious fashion in which Lord Clare had shown himself so consummate a master in the matter of the compact with the state prisoners. The Irish Chancellor, primed by Lord Castlereagh, explained the difficulties of the situation with crystal clearness to Mr. Pitt. It was now merely a matter of £ s. d. How much or how little didn't signify, since the blood-money was to be supplied by the victim herself. The Lords and Commons having made the plunge, were totally divested of all shame. They made use of a small party of anti-unionists as a lever to dig out more gold; swearing that they would all go over to that party unless their demands were complied with in all their greed. Thus was it with the upper class. The lower class was apathetic and hopeless—all except a few United Irishmen, who were making a new attempt to attain their ends by stirring up discord and division. The anti-unionists were leaving no stone unturned to inflame the spirit of the people. But the spirit was gone out of them. There would be a tussle for it, no doubt. It would be well for decorum's sake to postpone the conclu-

sion of the business for a few months, for it would look bad for the senators who were to be freshly bought to seem to change their opinions too suddenly. Europe would laugh if men who declared in April that union meant destruction were in May to turn round and vote in favour of it. Finally Mr. Pitt sent his tool home again, bidding him be discreet and diligent, and laughed in his sleeve so soon as his back was turned.

Lord Clare was puffed out with self-importance when he strutted into his house and found Madam Gillin ensconced there as though she were its mistress. Taking no heed of his frowns, she wagged her feathers with satisfaction, and straightway unfolded her budget. He was as much astonished as she could possibly desire. Shane then was illegitimate, and Terence the true Lord Glandore! This was the clue to much which had seemed inexplicable in my lady. Poor old friend! how she must have suffered—and she innocent, except in aiding and abetting her husband when it was too late to do anything else. It was evident that, born of the same parents, it was a cruel law which would treat one brother (and the elder one too) as a pariah for lack of a few sentences droned through the nose. It was natural that a mother should feel this strongly, and in a wrong-headed feminine way make difficulties greater in her efforts to gloze them over. But the old lord was right when he spoke the warn-

ing. His sons were only boys; they might have stepped into their legal places then without much harm resulting. But now after the long lapse of years, the situation wore another aspect. Shane had grown to manhood—to the prime of life—under the impression that he was true master of wealth and broad acres. His life had taken its permanent shape. It would be a smashing blow to him were his brother to come forward and claim his own. The position of Terence too was a singularly unhappy one. He had been bitterly wronged. Of that there could be no doubt, and his mother must have walked on red-hot ploughshares when she beheld him going straight to ruin. If he had been acknowledged as ‘my lord’ he would have done, of course, as the majority of lords did—would never have thought of joining the popular party, would not now be preparing to leave his country—a broken-hearted exile. For even the most virtuous in the Upper House were content at this juncture to remain neutral. Poor, poor old friend! What anguish must have been hers when she contemplated all this, as she must have done daily, without having strength to say the words she should have said! Actually she had been doomed to watch her own son drifting into the dark waters, and with her own hands to cut the rope which might have saved him. No wonder if her hair was white—her face of ashen pallor. No wonder if she was haunted by a ghost

who never left her side. Mrs. Gillin's story actually took away the breath of the chancellor as his mind wandered through the fields of the past, putting this and that together, fitting pieces of a puzzle into their places which hitherto had defied his skill.

In the first place he was moved with pity for the Countess of Glandore. Sure, her sufferings—dragged out and intensified instead of being healed by Time—would have turned long ago a less steady brain than hers. Poor lady! at this very moment her trials were at their acme. The son who had been so much wronged was about to depart on his sad journey. Would she have the courage to let him go without speaking the truth? And if she spoke the truth, what line would he take? It was a pity he had not been hanged in the ordinary course of events. He would then have gone to his grave in ignorance of the wrong done to him. The knot would have been severed. For, failing Terence, the title would be extinct; and, bastard or not, my lady's conscience would have been at rest with regard to Shane's inheriting. As he turned over the tangled mass he could not decide for which of the three he ought to be most sorry. Their cruel case touched the good portion of his heart—in which there was room for compassion for these three persons, whom he had known intimately for years; two of whom had grown up before his eyes. Shane's case was a most dreadful one. But not more cruel

than Terence's. All things considered, it would be best that Terence should never learn the truth, or Shane either. Things had gone so far that nothing but evil could come of their positions being reversed.

This was the verdict of the chancellor, and a worldly-wise one too. For he knew not that my lady's overburthened soul had already vomited forth the truth; that she had confessed to Shane, now, several weeks ago. This was his verdict, and Mrs. Gillin was reluctantly compelled to admit that he was right. But he, on the other hand, fully agreed with her that something must be done forthwith for Terence. The Viceroy must be spoken to, the King even must be interviewed—a pardon gained for the doomed exile without telling him the cause of it. By being deprived of a fortune which was legally his, he had been fearfully wronged. For the sake of others it would be well that he should never know how much. All things considered, his was a case for clemency. His Majesty, who was jealous of the ermine, and loved not to see it dragged through the mud, would appreciate at once the peculiarities with which the case was invested. But to hoodwink suspicion he must be advised to avoid too abrupt a pardon, such as should set the tongues of busybodies clacking. Terence must in a careless way be left behind when the vessel sailed, which was now lying ready in the Liffey. He must be made to promise to conspire no more, and then

be given to understand quietly that his misdeeds would be graciously forgotten.

Gillin went away content, and with a light heart. She had fulfilled her promise of protecting the son of her old lover. Shane, it was decided, was still to be Lord Glandore. Norah's mamma might now, with an easy conscience, set about the clinching of that match which she considered would be beneficial to her child. My lady's reluctant consent could be wrung from her by fear of her secret becoming known. She might even be told in plain words that her own evil imagination had conjured up baseless phantoms—that Norah was born two months before her mother made the acquaintance of the late lord, and that she had been brought up a Protestant by his desire simply for the sake of evading certain clauses in the Penal Code, which might jeopardise his legacy to a Catholic.

Madam Gillin had seen through my lady's terrors upon this point all along, and had played on them to revenge herself for the stern chatelaine's contemptuous airs. For the same cause she had first imagined a match between the two young people, which their own inclinations seemed inclined to ratify. It would be rare sport to bring the haughty woman to the dust, and compel her to accept Norah as a daughter! It would be, too, a spectacle of ineffable delight to see Norah make her appearance at a drawing-room by the *entrée* by virtue of her

rank as countess ! The fascinating idea took possession of the worthy woman ; yet shrank she not from that to which she considered herself bound by oath. She would have kicked over with her own fat foot, if need were, the palace she had built, and have thought no more of Norah as mistress of Strogue Abbey and the possible intimate friend of a lady-lieutenant ; but she was none the less charmed to find that duty and delight were not incompatible, that Lord Clare was decided in his opinion that Shane must still wear the coronet.

Lord Clare considered and reconsidered the strange embroglio whilst refreshing his inner man with chicken-pasty for a long business talk with Castlereagh. There were several reasons why Shane must not be ousted now. What with pugnacious waifs and strays from the broken ranks of the United Irishmen ; what with the honesty of a small band of senators, and the rapacity of the remainder, there would be a very pretty fight ere this union could be jotted down in history. To make success certain consummate tact would be required, as well as a full purse. Every vote would be of enormous worth ; Castlereagh in his latest bulletin had computed the votes of ordinary M.P.'s at £5000 a head. The title of Glandore carried with it parliamentary pressure of many kinds ; direct or indirect influence over constituencies, as well as weight in the Upper House. If all this

influence were transferred from Shane to Terence, it would be used on the wrong side. He would certainly join Lords Downshire and Powerscourt and other troublesome persons, who dared to flout the King; would sneer at English marquises and be faithful to the errors which beset an heir-presumptive. It behoved the chancellor to be cunning on this as on other points. There was no telling what might happen next, in so singularly involved a complication as this of the Glandore family. Two points only were quite apparent. Terence, the real earl, must not go into captivity. Shane, the sham earl, must be retained in his position, at least until he had borne his share in securing the success of the Great Measure.

When Castlereagh arrived presently at Ely Place, he disturbed his colleague's complacency by hints of difficulty independent of money or of votes. Not only was the scatter-brained school-lad Robert Emmett back in Ireland (this was no news); but he was showing that he was a cockatrice indeed. All his acts were watched, his intentions known; but he was doing considerable damage already to the cause of Government, and bade fair to make himself still more objectionable. He was actually starting the foolish old plots again which had only been allowed to run their course at all for state reasons, and which were now altogether preposterous and out of date. He prated of tying together the ravelled strands of

the confederacy. Major Sirr had intelligence of midnight meetings of the good old kind, with passwords which everybody knew. Had even seen a wonderful green uniform, with a cocked hat like a merry-andrew's at a fair, which was being manufactured for the younger Emmett.

'The boy is an honest boy,' Lord Castlereagh averred. 'He is simply running his head against a wall. It would be well to save him from the effects of his own lunacy, if possible ; a strait waistcoat would fit him better than his fancy dress.'

This was annoying news, but it was not all. The state of the country was unsafe, and Lord Cornwallis was of opinion that, unless the measure could speedily be finished off, difficulties might arise which it was the interest of all parties to avoid. Time was when the lash and halter were salutary instruments ; but now it was essential that they should be used no more. Agrarian outrages were becoming ominously frequent. Not only property was in danger, but life too. Not merely the life of the low scum, which of course didn't matter, but the precious lives of lords and ladies. Some lords, indeed, the remembrance of whose performances on the triangle made them specially unpopular, had been obliged to surround their mansions with foreign troops, and were delighted to escape from the homes of their forefathers to the safer atmosphere of Dame Street and the Castle. Was not

that awkward? Even that was not all! Here was something worse. At the time when the English militia regiments were drafted into Ireland for the protection of the proprietors, it was agreed that their enforced stay should not exceed a certain period, with option of eventually returning home or lingering on as might be deemed convenient. The specified time was up now. In a wild chorus—as eager as the Viceroy’s private solo—they all declared that they would not remain on Irish soil a moment longer than they could help. Even the strong influence of Lord Cornwallis, who kept his solo for his private bedchamber when his nightcap was on, could only obtain a month or two’s delay. Things were shaky. Another Hurry might be brought about unless those in office were careful; and it would be monstrous inconvenient if such a contingency were to take place.

This, according to Lord Castlereagh’s account, was in the future. Let us look at the present, which was sad enough.

The melancholy convoy started for Fort George. Women, children, and strong men crowded to the quay, and wept as the martyrs were wafted to their prison. Young Robert Emmett was seen to wave his hand from a window towards Tom, who stood at the ship’s bows to take his last look at Erin. So soon as the vessel was out of sight, the young man kneeled down by the open casement with both arms

aloft, and swore an oath there to repel the Sassenagh yet, or perish in the attempt. Many of those who were wearily plodding homeward recognised his figure and his action, and, kneeling too, registered their vows in concert. All the first leaders of the United Irishmen who were not dead were on board that transport; and Robert, left alone, set to work with a will (as Castlereagh graphically put it) to batter his head against a wall. He engaged mysterious premises, decayed warehouses in back slums, from out of which came by-and-by the hum of many voices, the clang of many anvils. The Battalion of Testimony peeped through the key-holes, and were mightily amused. This infantile echo of the preparations of '96 and '97 was diverting—a right jovial jest—a jolly jape! They related to Major Sirr and his crony, Cassidy, all they had seen and heard, and those worthies roared too, till tears of exhausted merriment ran down their cheeks.

The young enthusiast's guileless arrangements for driving the Englishry into the sea were ridiculous, no doubt. He kept the details of them to himself, never telling those who loved him of them. As they were not in the habit of looking through key-holes, they knew not that he was working in earnest; that he had determined in his own mind, should the union pass, to make the first shaking out of the united flag upon the Castle his signal for attack;

when a handful of scatter-brains, as unpractical as himself, should storm the Castle, kill the Viceroy, proclaim Ireland free, and the Act of Union a valueless piece of dirty parchment. Jack Cade's rabblement was no whit more laughable an assemblage than the army which Robert proposed to lead to victory. The authorities consulted as to what should be done with him, and decided that it would be safer to allow him to stir up a little dust in the metropolis than to drive him into the provinces, where he really might give serious trouble. It would be better to let the affair come to a head at once, while the English militia and my Lord Cornwallis were still at hand. It was fortunate for Government that Robert kept his secret so well; for if his friends had been aware of his guileless plots, they would have applied at once to the Viceroy, who would have had no alternative but to lock up the firebrand and allow the coals to smoulder. Not even to Sara did he speak openly; though he certainly did let out vague hints which frightened the damsel not a little; not even to Terence did he speak at all—to Terence, who remained quietly in seclusion at the Abbey for months after the vessel sailed, wondering if he was forgotten, or whether he was set apart to head a second convoy.

As for Doreen, so soon as her amazement had abated (which resulted from the eavesdropping), it gave place to a feeling of uneasiness. Her aunt had

spoken of the disposal of her hand as a matter of convenience, for the benefit of Shane ; and she now deciphered all the riddle which had seemed so crabbed and contradictory. With apprehension she awaited a change in the young lord's demeanour, expected him to play the lover, and be miserable, as orthodox suitors are. He was undoubtedly most miserable, but he made no attempt to play the lover. Although she knew it not, her own manner was the maiden's safeguard. Cousin Shane, who had always been repelled by her cold ways, felt that he might as well try to make love to a dead body as to this full-blooded girl, who, like Terence, announced that her life was done. Have we not read somewhere of a certain prince who espoused an ice-maiden for the sake of her dowry ? She clasped him in her arms, and froze him slowly. Just such a bride would Miss Wolfe be to Shane. And yet he saw that his mother was right. If Terence were somehow to learn the secret, and to claim his own, what would become of his illegitimate brother ? His mother was right, as she always was. Lord Kilwarden's nest-egg would keep the wolf from the door. What a pity it could not be his without the burthen of the accompanying ice-maiden ! As he looked round he decided reluctantly that there was no other rock to make for ; that he must force his inclinations, give up Norah, possess himself of Doreen ; but the sight of her dreary face and listless demeanour was always

enough to put to rout his most firm resolve—the while he cursed himself for his repulsion. My lady's ghost was his companion now as well as hers. It communed with him in the night; it whispered to him by day. The countess perceived the leaven of fear working within him, and her burthen became, if possible, more heavy on her back. Irresistible impulse had impelled her to confess. An indistinct dread of open rupture between the brothers had forced her to give Shane a reason for more considerate behaviour towards Terence. But the shot, she found, had entirely missed its mark. Shane was not a good man; he was gross, brutal, and endowed with none of the attributes of the serpent. He was not like Cassidy, for instance. If he hated a person, all the world might know it. By virtue of his bringing-up as Chief of Blasters and King of Cherokees, he was terribly handy with rapier and pistol; could send his closest friend to Hades without compunction; but then it must be done according to the rules set down by the Knights of Tara, and in open battle, with paces marked out and seconds looking on. Like many selfish men, he could be good-natured so long as affability was cheap. But how grievously had my lady been mistaken in supposing that fear would induce civility to Terence, in proportion to the wrong that he was doing him. On the contrary, by the light of my lady's confession, he saw Terence from such an

aspect, that his hitherto colourless dislike was turned at once to fiercest hate. Terence was his junior—one, too, who had brought himself, by his own acts, to shipwreck, and had done much besides to spoil his elder's prospects. And this fellow—six years younger than himself—was to take the bread out of his mouth, because, forsooth, their father and mother had postponed the mouthing of a few words!

From Shane's point of view it was monstrously unjust. By right of father and of mother he was Lord Glandore. He could not—would not—be commonly civil to this fellow, who might, some of these days, eject him from all that made life pleasant. Vainly his unhappy mother argued. The case, he persisted, stood thus, and no otherwise. She could not alter what was done, if she talked till Doomsday. Vainly she vowed that the secret lay between him and her and Mrs. Gillin. He must not be rude to Mrs. Gillin, or jilt her daughter, all at once. That amourette must be allowed to dwindle by slow degrees, till it should fade out from sheer lack of sustenance. Meanwhile he must make up to Doreen and be civil to Terence, trusting that events would shape themselves rightly after all. If the worst came to the worst, his mother would speak solemnly to Terence, reminding him of the oath he made by his father's death-bed that he would be loyal to the elder-born, and adjure him not to stain his soul by perjury. At mention of that circumstance Shane

pished and pshawed, for at best it was an oath wrung wrongfully from a little lad; and he felt with dismay that if she was inclined to cling to such broken reeds as that, her hopes could not be so rosy as she pretended. Sometimes, in despair, he determined to throw up the game; to seek better fortune in some foreign service; to offer his sword and courage to Austria or Prussia; then, in reckless mood, he would veer round, swearing that he would hold by his coronet till it was torn out of his grasp; that the grave would be preferable to disgrace and beggary. This mood assumed after a while the upper hand; and under its influence he did things which capped his earlier fame as King of Cherokees, and bade fair to land him in a mad-house.

He gave way more and more to drink. His conduct became daily less trammelled by accepted rules. He took up a passion for hunting in the night. To his dogs, who followed their noses, it was all one whether they tracked their prey by rays of sun or moon. To carry out my Lord Glandore's conceit, however, it was necessary to provide flambeaux. A number of servants, well mounted, led the way with torches over drain and wall, and the shuddering cottiers, startled from sleep by a nocturnal 'Tally-ho!' turned round again to resume their broken rest, muttering that it was not hell let loose, only mad Glandore.

Perhaps his uncertain future urged him to break his neck like a gentleman ; perhaps he only sought in oddity a refuge from his muddled thoughts. At any rate, he soon became the talk of Dublin, and his mother grew daily more haggard and more wan.

Among the men whom Shane met every day in the capital was Mr. Cassidy, who, by dint of hay-making during the brief time when the sun shone, had materially improved his position in life. Hand and glove with Major Sirr, who watched young Robert like a lynx, and whose private duties on behalf of union were no less important than they had been in preceding years, he managed to stuff his nest with comfortable wadding, manufactured chiefly from bank-notes. He took care that Government should know that but for him Tone would have escaped, and Terence possibly, and many others. He cultivated the powerful, bullied the timid, flattered the vain, duped the credulous, amused the convivial. He received a handsome pension (as depository of awkward secrets), which raised him for ever above the rank of a half-mounted to that of a gentleman to the backbone ; received splendid presents from suspected persons who quaked before a vision of Fort George ; laid money by ; was altogether a prosperous individual, with a band of spies under his own orders—the flower and pride of the Staghose garden. And prosperity sat well upon his jolly features. Impunity gave him *aplomb*. His

clothes were handsome, his entertainments festive. He could sing a song or crack a bottle against any man alive. He was not puffed up by success. It was but natural that he should be elected by acclamation a Cherokee ; a Blaster ; that he should be welcomed among the set of drunken, swearing, fighting daredevils by Shane, their leader, who had always been his patron. The influence of so merry a blade was sure to become great amongst the rackets M.P.'s, who would shortly be called upon to vote. Promises of great things to come were freely made by the chancellor and his colleague Castlereagh, if those who inclined to backsliding were well kept to the sticking-point.

Now a very brilliant idea burst at the right moment from the brain of Mr. Cassidy—an idea which showed that he understood the foibles of his countrymen, and well knew how best to play on them. Watchful Europe decided some time before that the Irish senate was hopelessly disgraced, and branded its members with a verdict of moral cowardice. They could not with truth deny the soft impeachment, yet they attempted to justify themselves by showing that physically at least they were no cowards. Shane was but one example out of many. 'Fighting Fitzgerald' was even more wild than he. The palm of perfect Cherokeeism was awarded to Lord Glandore in some measure from consideration of his rank. The Lords and Commons made up

for the moral cowardice, of which they were notoriously guilty, by an extra amount of blustering and ruffling. They were aristocratic bravoës. Their hands were always on their swords. What better opportunity for a little ‘play’ than diversity of political opinion? Mr. Cassidy (newly elected to Daly’s, hard by the senate-house) proposed that covers should be laid there every day, at Government expense, for—say—thirty or forty guests at least, who could thus be counted upon, on an emergency, to swell the ranks of the Government party in either House; and who, inflamed with wine and enthusiasm, would be delighted to shoot down, or spit, on shortest notice, any unwise person who should disagree from the opinions of their amphitryon. This project was thought ingenious, and was acted on. The feasts were known as ‘pistol-dinners,’ and took place—either at Daly’s or in a committee-room adjoining, until their *raison d’être* had ceased—under the superintendence of Mr. Cassidy, who, wise enough to assume for a purpose a lower seat, placed this or that lord *en evidence*, as circumstances seemed to dictate. It was only natural that he should push forward as much as possible his patron, Lord Glاندore; and the latter, as he grew more reckless and more claret-stained, came to glory in the unenviable privilege, and to put trust in the cheery friend who once was proud to be his slave.

He told him his passing woes, asked his advice,

and sometimes took it. If you are sorely troubled, and in your anxiety to conceal that you are losing your nerve, force yourself on to preposterous deeds of prowess, there is much comfort to be obtained from the sympathetic ring of a jolly voice, the warm clasp of a shoulder-of-mutton hand. Cassidy, too, was so open and so innocent—so easily seen through. Lord Glandore felt a sort of disdain for him, dubbing him, with patrician condescension, a big grown-up baby, and so forth—even whilst he clutched for support the giant's burly arm. And Cassidy was no whit offended, laughing more loudly than ever as his patron's jests waxed broader—till the windows shook again, and the sound-waves carried a shimmer of his braying from Daly's to the House of Peers.

Sometimes Lord Clare deigned to encourage his satellites by appearing in person, during an interval of debate, at a pistol-dinner, whilst Lord Castle-reagh was entertaining on a grand scale at home. Then were toasts drunk with three times three—Government toasts, to which the chancellor responded in a voice broken by emotion, with a lowly visage and hand pressed on heart; toasts which were borne on the air out of open windows to the ears of passers-by, who, scowling, hurried away. Then, fired by his hints, the pot-valiant heroes would rush forth and run a-muck—a right jovial way of finishing an evening from the point of view of a

Cherokee ; and the chancellor, protesting that the boys really were too lively and amusing, would return to the House alone by the private covered way.

One evening, when appearing amongst them to announce that the crisis was close at hand, he professed to be mightily alarmed by the proceedings of the opposition party. These were in the habit of meeting at my Lord Charlemont's, and on this occasion, he said with sorrow, they had dared to insult the King, in the person of his ministers, by burning himself and Lord Castlereagh in effigy in the middle of Stephen's Green. The chancellor said that it was most unkind and inconsiderate. Yet with Christian meekness he implored the faithful servants of his Majesty to take no notice of the outrage. The result was as he intended. With a wild war-whoop the lords and M.P.'s rose up from dinner, dragging the tablecloth with them in their zeal, and rushed off to Stephen's Green to fight it out. The anti-unionists were speedily put to flight, for they were few. By this means, and such tricks as this, did the crafty minister strive to browbeat the timid, many of whom, unassailable from any other point, were to be coerced into submission by the bullet-test.

Two only of the diners remained behind—both of whom were usually in the very van—Lord Glandore and Cassidy. The former was much out of sorts.

The latter, certain that there was something on his mind, lay in wait to discover what it could be. He was very fond of penetrating other people's mysteries, was Mr. Cassidy—for it is astonishing how an ingenious mind can turn them to its own advantage—and Mr. Cassidy was always on the prowl to pick up stray wadding for his nest. He therefore, with a look of concern, sat down beside my lord, whose face lay on his arms upon the table, and rallied him about his evident depression.

'Come, come!' he cried, with a pat of his great hand. 'Sure your lordship's head was not well seasoned in its youth. What ails ye? The claret's good enough.'

'I wish I could be drowned in it!' Shane muttered with despondency; 'and then there'd be an end. There was a Duke of Clarence killed that way, you know—lucky fellow!'

'Is it kilt? 'Deed and your lordship won't come to so mean a death, I'll warrant; though ye're mighty careless of your life—more than I'd be if all you have was mine.'

Shane started up with a fierce glare. Everybody's chance arrows seemed winged to stick into his flanks. But he saw nothing in the giant's flat, round visage but an engaging air of humour and unguarded openness. What a good-natured face! Shane, weaker than his mother, yearned for sympathy and consolation; the secret she had carried

so long with heroic fortitude ate into his softer fibre, and devoured him. He was at his small wits' end to know how to act. Cassidy's warm heart and kindly friendship might perchance suggest something. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings wisdom has come ere now. Acting on the impulse, Shane, with maudlin tears, swore his dear friend to solemn secrecy, and amidst a coruscation of cries and curses, blurted out the story which we wot of.

'What a cruel, cruel world it was!' he wailed, 'and what a bitter fate was his! He would certainly come to be a beggar—would be thrown out upon the world an outcast, he, who was not fitted to battle with it—for my lady was very queer in her ways, would be certain to tell Terence some day, just as she had told him. Why had she ever told him? wicked and unnatural mother to cause him such harrowing grief! Why was not Terence hanged? Why didn't they send him to Fort George? Once taken out of sight, the chances of my lady's blabbing would be lessened.'

Cassidy sat listening to his rambling lamentations, with his china-blue eyes staring vacantly; then hummed to himself the words of the old song while his nimble brain was working:

'A jackdaw noble, glittering in the plumes
Of the old race, whose honours he assumes!'

'My lady—my lady! It's always your mother

ye're bothering about,' he said presently. 'Sure, your lordship's not tied to my lady's apron-string !'

But Shane's babble, once set going, was not to be stemmed by pertness. He proceeded to unfold all her suggestions, mingled with his own doubts and hopes and fears; and as he talked on, new ideas sprang into shape, which hitherto had lain indistinct and dormant. He told of Doreen and her fortune, and how he would like to marry her if he could get rid of her directly afterwards—of how fortunate it was that he had sold his parliamentary interest so well—of how Terence had rebuked him on that subject, and what a crackbrained lunatic he was—girt round with old-fashioned prejudice—beset with starched quirks and rubbish.

Cassidy's eyes twinkled, for he detected a glittering piece of wadding which would suit his nest right well—a precious piece of wadding made of revenge and self-interest interwoven—a rare piece of wadding which should be his if craft could win it.

'Would Miss Wolfe have your lordship?' he said carelessly; 'sure, it's many a colleen that'd jump at your refined appearance, let alone your wealth. But she——' the sentence remained unfinished, out of respect. He would not make disagreeable remarks to his patron for anything whatever. He therefore whistled in a deprecating and

provoking manner, while the latter echoed pettishly :

‘But she—what?’

‘Maybe I’d best not tell ye! Well—if ye will have it—she—I fear she’s sweet upon another gintleman—that’s bad?’

Shane was fairly startled. It had never struck him that she could have already given herself away—to whom? As her form began to appear shadowy, he, with the usual inconsistency of man, began to hanker wildly after the ice-maiden—not for herself of course, but for the money-box.

‘It’s not possible!’ he cried.

‘Deed ’tis!’ returned the other, with compassion. ‘She’s deep in love with Councillor Crosbie. I’ve known it this long while.’

Shane ground his teeth and sprang upon his feet. This last blow was too much. What! this interloper was going to rob him of his birthright and his name, and, not content with that, was also going to take the precious ice-maiden, whose paltry little stockingful would at least keep hunger from the pauper’s door. In an access of rage Shane paraded up and down the club-room like a tiger. Inflamed by his own critical condition he lashed himself into savage unreasoning passion, and Cassidy whistled softly before the fire, with his big legs stretched out and his fists deep in his pockets, until the young man should have attained the re-

quisite degree of heat. Then, when he judged the patient's temper to be sufficiently exasperated, he passed his arm through his, and in a low coaxing voice poured poison in his ear while the two walked. Sure, his lordship must take the bull by the horns and act promptly, unless he was satisfied to sit with hands before him and lose all. He must take measures to prevent Master Terence from seeing any more of his mother or of Miss Doreen until something could be definitely settled.

Shane half understood, and his blood tingled.

How did his lordship's father espouse her ladyship? Was it not after the then prevailing fashion of high-spirited Irish gentlemen? Did he not carry her off before all competitors, as many another noble member of the Abduction Club had carried away his bride? True, the Abduction Club had ceased to exist five and twenty years ago; but in the present unsettled condition of the country, there was no reason why a leaf should not be taken from its book. Lord Kilwarden would hush the matter up, which would merely be a little scandal, strictly limited within the family circle. Miss Doreen would be Madam Shane: good luck to the winsome colleen! Her money would be his—so would be the forty-five thousand pounds for which he had sold his vote. Come what might, then, there would be no need to talk of drowning himself in claret—of being thrust forth a beggar in the world.

Shane listened and brightened up. The abduction idea was good, and jumped with his Irish romance. He would marry the ice-maiden without having to woo her—a proceeding that he knew he could not accomplish. But how about Terence? He would interfere—knight of the rueful countenance though he professed to be. My lady too—what should prevent her from speaking before these arrangements could be carried out? The ruinous words were on the tip of her tongue. Terence was at Strogue, and bound to remain there. He could not leave the grounds without breaking his parole.

Cassidy was delivered of a real inspiration; and nothing could be easier than to carry it out. Did not the chancellor say only an hour ago that the tussle was close at hand—that the Great Measure was to be again brought forward without delay? Well then. Master Terence must disappear. Nonsense! No *sbirri* in long cloaks as in an opera. Major Sirr and faithful Cassidy could manage that. He could be locked up by an error of orders just for a little. Was he not a state-prisoner on parole? and was not the younger Emmett—foolish young scapegrace, who thought he concealed his identity under the name of Hewitt—busily preparing to dash his head against a wall? What easier than to suggest that Councillor Crosbie—already so gravely compromised—had broken his parole and gone off to join the baby-conspirators? The Bat-

talion would come up by dozens to swear it. They would minutely describe where and how—the other side of the country—they had captured him a second time; would claim rewards for doing so. Afterwards he should be forthcoming without a hair of his head being injured—his affectionate brother need not fear for his life. Apologies would be made if need were (for Government seemed determined to treat him very leniently), and all would be right as a trivet. Whether any one would speak or no, so that later on he might assume his title, was an after consideration. By the time he was released, Lord Glandore would have voted; Doreen would be Madam Shane; Lord Kilwarden would have blessed his children. The matter would be settled—Shane would be safely provided for. If the rumour of the councillor's escape and the breaking of his parole were deftly managed, his own friends would be disgusted; his mother, even, would see that confession would not help matters; Government would wash its hands of so determined a Croppy, when, the measure carried, his influence would be null and void. It would be very much more likely than not that those who could speak would irrevocably decide—after the escapade which they would father on him—that the secret must be kept for ever.

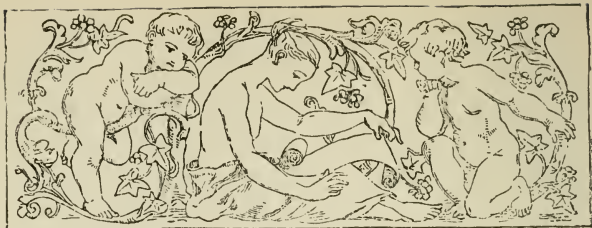
Shane was amazed and delighted. The babe and suckling had spoken wisdom indeed—admirable!

Verily the best plans are the most simple ones, and nothing could be simpler than this. It was not possible more cleverly to meet every difficulty, to countercheck every contingency, than by this subtle scheme. He promised himself in the future to make Terence a splendid allowance as a salve to his own conscience—so soon as he held his portion of the blood-money, and Doreen's stocking and his marquise, and a certainty that nobody would blab. So easily are we inclined to believe what suits us that his bugbear vanished into the air. Terence would never know. The crisis past, the prospective marquis would score a point before the world by laying claim to his brother's liberty, feigning to demand it for state services, instead of promotion in the peerage. Of course everybody would applaud so gracious, so affectionate an act. He would receive both favours. The clouds which threatened to smother him were melting unaccountably before a magic wand. How strange that the man who had power to work so potent a spell should be stupid blundering Cassidy!

He clasped the giant warmly by the paw, vowing eternal gratitude if he would see to this at once. Would he also consider as to what favour the prospective Marquis of Glandore should ask the Government for his dear friend—his excellent friend—his saviour?

Cassidy laughed with a great guffaw, which was

not all innocence, at the change which his suggestions had worked. It was just possible that things would not turn out quite as the future marquis saw them. In a case of abduction there may be a rescue. The rescuer may carry off the prize. What if Doreen, instead of becoming by main force Madam Shane, were to return to the world as Madam Cassidy? The giant had an eye to that stocking, not for his patron but himself. He also had a consuming desire to possess its mistress—all the more that she had twice refused him; that she had declined his acquaintance altogether since the little party at Glas-aitch-é. It would be a fine revenge to possess her by right of conquest—a fine revenge on her and on the odious Terence. No; it was hardly likely that the giant intended to permit Miss Wolfe to become Madam Shane.



CHAPTER X.

CONSIGNED TO MOILEY.



WHEN the fatal moment arrived, Dublin was agog. The influence of the lords, so dearly purchased, was brought to bear with all its force upon the members, for whose return to parliament they were responsible. Jupiter was showering gold on Danae, resolved to consummate the sacrifice of her virtue. Debate followed debate with unequal success. First one side considered that the day was theirs; then the other triumphed; then the pistol-heroes rushed forth, and howled and swaggered, and pinked their men, and returned to go on with the argument which had been dropped in their excitement. In fact, both parties seemed agreed as to one point only, viz., their determination to behave in as undignified a manner as might be. It was the old story of physical bullying doing its best to conceal moral cowardice and turpitude—a scene of hectoring and

license and vulgar abuse and uproar, which shamed both parties in equal measure.

Lord Cornwallis had done his best. In the course of the year which elapsed between the two attempts to carry the union he made two state progresses—one in the southern counties and the other in the north, and preached the millennium according to St. Pitt. Clare and Castlereagh both laboured on in town as sure no negro slaves ever laboured; and yet when the time came all was still provokingly uncertain. This Irish senate was unutterably vile. Having surrendered its scrap of virtue, it repudiated, like an irreclaimable strumpet, even the maxim of honour amongst thieves. It was clear that further delay would only make matters worse by inducing senators to open their mouths yet wider. Portentous debates occupied the Commons; the House frequently sat all night, breaking up only at mid-day. Members declared that they must give up the ghost or have a holiday; some sought refuge among pillows and boluses from the Herculean labours of the House, while others dragged themselves, like martyrs to the stake, through the dense masses of the populace that had taken possession of College Green, to cheer non-unionists with vociferous shouts, and hurl mud and putrid eggs at unpopular legislators. On Lord Castlereagh fell the onus of wielding the thunderbolts of Jove, and he acquitted himself of the task most excellently. Like the chan-

cellor, he had the 'gift of the gab;' was not particular as to the language he employed; was well versed in forensic Billingsgate; could return any one, in sledge-hammer fashion, a Roland for his Oliver. The modest were overwhelmed by flights of astounding rhapsody; the patriotic silenced by brazen lies; the uncertain routed by bewildering irony. As the dogmatic chancellor (now that he no longer feared the Viceroy) trampled the peerage under his feet, so did the clever chief secretary discomfit the Commons. Money was poured forth lavishly; threats and promises were distributed with profuse hands. The tussle was sharp, but none could doubt which side would in the end prove victorious. Concerning Grattan (the man of '82), Lord Cornwallis wrote that he was no better than an old doll. The jaws of the ancient lion were toothless. 'Grattan,' he said, 'degraded as he is in the opinion of the respectable portion of the community, yet has a certain influence with the Roman Catholics of Dublin, who are disaffected, and hate British connection.' Of Curran also he felt no dread, for the little man was no longer in parliament—his silver tongue was gagged; he was apparently worn out by his efforts on behalf of the state-prisoners—was sickening (as he put it) with a 'constitutional dejection of the heart, which could find no remedy in water or in wine.' No wonder if he felt unwell. He saw members moved, like

beasts, in droves—a picture of human degradation never equalled since Nebuchadnezzar went to grass.

Practically the question was already settled long before young Robert looked out for the running up of the new flag. Not but what the Dublin populace were quite prepared for riot. They seized private carriages and tossed them into the Liffey ; marched about with political effigies, and danced round the bonfires which consumed them. All this was very harmless vapouring in the eyes of those who yet heard the shrieks of the victims of '98—yet saw the Reign of Terror, with its pitch-caps, its cardings, its picketings, and triangles. No one took heed of the street mobs, even though my Lord Clare himself, in his carelessness, came once quite near to danger. It was on the morning of one of the last struggles. The debate had lasted, without a pause, for eighteen hours, and the members were wearily dispersing, when the crowd manifested a desire to 'shilloo' the speaker, who had behaved with refreshing patriotism. His horses were taken from his carriage, a hundred men dashed forward to seize the pole. At this moment the lord chancellor appeared upon the steps, with insolent chin in air, dressed in his great flapped wig and rustling laced robes. 'Harness him to the carriage !' cried a wag. My Lord Clare started round with an indignant reprimand ; but perceiving from his vantage-ground a sea of some ten thousand threatening heads, he

retreated backwards with caution, as a countryman might do before a bull, flourishing a toy-pistol in his hand, with which he swore to blow out the brains of the first man who came within six paces of him. The extraordinary pageant moved slowly along; so singular a spectacle that it tickled the humorous side of the Hibernian character—the lord chancellor of Ireland walking backwards through the mud, holding up his robes with one hand lest he should trip over them, pointing with the other a tiny firearm at ten thousand enemies. Sure, this alone was a glorious triumph for King Mob. Choosing his moment, he whisked with a swift dash into a house, the door of which withstood the battering of myriad kicks until Lord Clare made good his escape by a back way. But there were mobs and mobs, in Dublin as elsewhere. This one happened to be a good-tempered mob, for the patriotic speaker had gained a point that day. But there were other mobs abroad made up of desperate men—of men whose skins bore the scars of the Riding-school, whose hearths were desolate, whose homes were bereft of dear ones. It was to these, and such as these, whom no jests could soften, that young Robert looked for the realisation of his dream. His natural fear of bloodshed was washed away by the woes that had been the portion of his friends. He clung to the notion that the mantle of Theobald had fallen on his shoulders; that as Moses was forbidden to enter the Promised

Land, so, for some Divine reason, Theobald was punished; and that he, Robert, was to play the part of Joshua. His green uniform failed to please him. A new one was designed—gorgeous—of scarlet, faced with green and laced with gold. He tried it on in secret before a glass, and minced hither and thither to see what the figure would look like that was to storm the Castle and kill Cornwallis in his bed. Yet, for all these childish pranks, none could be more earnest than he, or more genuinely prepared to do or die. The hordes of banditti which still infested Wicklow were taken into partnership. On the signal of a rocket they were to rush to their posts. Some were to seize the desecrated Senate-house; others to attack Chapelizod; others to secure important streets. Young Robert reserved to himself and a selected band of braves the sacred right of storming the Castle and pulling down the objectionable ensign.

To one only of his friends did he confide a vague suspicion of his intentions as they approached maturity. That one was gentle Sara, whom he bound by awful oaths, though she was in nowise fitted for a heroine, to divulge nothing of what she knew, but to keep her chamber, and pray there for his success. The poor child knelt by her virgin bed, and prayed and wept with terrible forebodings. Truth to tell, he told her very little. What was this venture which was to produce such marvels? What

means could he employ to prevent the parliament from voting. Would he come to stand in the dock as so many had done who were now at rest? No. By Divine mercy he had been kept in England during the awful agony—had been specially preserved from peril. It could not have been in sport that the beloved undergraduate had been withheld from temptation—merely to be dashed down at last, when the tide of bloodshed was stemmed? No, no! Sara, with scared eyes, swept the ripples of flaxen hair from off her pure girlish brow, and rebuked herself for want of trustful faith as she folded her hands together and tried to pray. But her mind wandered. She could not help seeing in memory the distracted gestures of the trail of widows—of the wives who were worse than widows, for their husbands languished in lifelong duress. Who was she that she might hope to fare better than they? She was a feeble girl, who loved her father and her lover, and had no room in her being for more than that. If any evil befel Robert, what would become of her? Could she hope to rally? She was not one of those who bend before a storm and rise again but little the worse for buffeting. She was one of the sensitive sort, who may linger for a brief space perhaps before they wither. Even strong, haughty-browed Doreen was broken by what she had passed through. What if Sara were likewise summoned at the last moment to pass under the yoke?

She would succumb at once. She prayed for help, and implored mercy with the desperate energy of a young creature who clings to the sweets of life, while tears rained down her cheeks. Doreen, looking for her by-and-by, found the maid lying on the floor asleep, and sobbing as she slept, with reddened lids and trembling baby lips. What was it that ailed her? Doreen inquired tenderly. Silly chit! to allow a dream to vex her thus. Sara said 'Yes, it was a dream;' and sent a prayer to heaven that an idle dream—no more—the fearsome vision might prove to be.

Doreen went upstairs to seek her friend, because the shadow of trouble still hung over the inmates of Strogue Abbey, and at the best it was not a gay house to be alone in. Now solitude reigned in its reception-rooms, for Curran shut himself in his chamber to forget the impending union; Shane was madly rollicking in Dublin; Terence had disappeared, and my lady had taken to her bed.

Yes, Terence had disappeared; none knew how or whither. Shane professed bitter anger, and cried out about family disgrace, till, on meeting the calm eye of Miss Wolfe fixed on him, he stammered and was silent. As for her, she knew not what to think. Perceiving his mother's grief, had he, in his chivalry, withdrawn himself, lest his presence should add poignancy to it? But how about the breaking of his parole? Sure, he was too honour-

able a man to do such a thing ! She went and took counsel of Madam Gillin, who scratched her head and looked serious. This was a trick of Cassidy's — of that she felt quite certain, for that worthy had shown private spite in the way he had tried to run the young man down before. Yet what could be his object now ? She soothed Doreen's anxiety as much as possible, affecting herself to be quite comfortable on the subject ; but privately resolved to make another attack upon the chancellor as soon as his mind was free about the union, if the vanished one did not return. So Doreen waited in suspense, tending her aunt, who seemed very ill, and her young friend, who was singularly disturbed and wretched ; while Mr. Curran moped, and the Abbey was as gloomy as a sepulchre.

Soon the one engrossing subject occupied every mind, to the exclusion, for the moment, of all others. A mob, by no means so good-tempered as that which had pursued Lord Clare, gathered about the House at the second reading of the bill, and assumed so threatening an attitude that the military were called out, who fired a volley among the people, and so dispersed them. Strange beacons were seen at night upon the Wicklow Hills. Rumour whispered that something was afoot. Timid people wished that the crisis was well over. Major Sirr and his lambs made a raid on a certain house, where they found a hundred bottles filled

with powder, several bushels of musket-balls, meshes of tow mixed with tar and gunpowder, a large quantity of pikes. Of these they took quiet possession, and drove away, without seeking to follow the matter up. Did this point to a new conspiracy? M.P.s asked each other. How deeply laid was it? By whom organised? Why had no arrests followed the discovery of the stores? Rumour said that the ill-conditioned brother of Lord Glandore was plotting again; that he had broken his parole, notwithstanding the extreme kindness with which he had been treated. Well, well! Some folks were born to the halter—as some are to the purple, and others to misfortune. The sooner the great measure was carried, and the fate of Ireland decided, the better it would be for all parties. So said the members, as for the last time they strolled under the shadow of the Senate-house.

That last day was one of breathless excitement. All knew that the affair was settled; yet they waited, as if in expectation of a miracle. False reports flew hither and thither in distracting numbers. Messengers rode out with bulletins hour by hour to Strogue and other important country places, where fine ladies waited. Lord Clare, taking a lesson from his recent predicament, surrounded the House with cavalry. Foot-soldiers, with matches burning, lined the colonnades. No demonstration of popular feeling was permitted. Those who were

about to cancel the national charter were well protected ; yet seemed they ill at ease. Many anti-unionists, seeing how hopeless was the case, withdrew with sad looks before the third reading of the bill ; others, urged by a morbid curiosity, waited for the curtain's drop. The lobbies were crammed ; the galleries crowded. A monotonous murmur ran along the benches. Some were ashamed, some shameless, some—too late—sorrow-smitten. Among the latter was Lord Kilwarden, who despatched a courier to his daughter to say that he would stop to the last.

So the hours waned, and it was night ere Doreen's father arrived at Strogue. He was deeply, miserably dejected. So much so, that his daughter marvelled at him.

'It's all over !' he cried, in indignation mingled with contrition. 'The men who forgot their country have slain *her*, that she may not survive to remember *them*. The slave's collar has been slipped on—its lock snapped to for ever ! But there's something yet to come. I have a hint from Clare that there will probably be more trouble to-morrow. Glandore told me the same thing just now, who has it, he says, from the Staghouse people, who are sure to know. Lord Cornwallis will have taken his measures, doubtless, for as a soldier he is above praise. I have business with him to-morrow, so we had better return at once to Dublin.'

‘Now!’ Doreen said, in wonder.

‘You are not afraid?’ her father asked, with a weak smile. ‘My coach is below. Its liveries are well known. No one would harm me, thank Heaven!’

Afraid? Doreen was not given to physical fear. Then her father explained that Shane was coming home, and with him Cassidy and some more choice spirits, who were to close the lower rooms of the Abbey and remain on the defensive, lest the anti-unionists should attempt revenge.

‘You will be equally safe here or in Dublin, dear,’ Lord Kilwarden said. ‘But I seem to think that you would prefer my company to that of cousin Shane.’

Locked up with Shane—and Cassidy! No, indeed. Knowing what she knew, that would be too dreadful. Thanking her father with a look, she fetched a shawl, kissed pale Sara, and, bidding her be of good cheer, for the Abbey would be well protected, climbed into the coach, which started forthwith for Dublin.

‘If Glandore is cautious, so will we be,’ remarked Lord Kilwarden, with an attempt at cheerfulness. ‘Wanderers may be hanging about the high-road, waiting for a signal in the morning. See, the beacons are all alight along the hilltops! Do they not remind you of the time—not so long ago—when we were expecting a French invasion? I trust the

Viceroy has been warned, for he does not comprehend our mercurial temperament, and Sirr's people are strangely apathetic. A new *régime* has begun to-night, my love, which I hope may in time bring peace to our distracted land. My vote went for union, for I know that we are unstable, but excellent if wisely controlled. The Scotch, you will remember, hated their union at first. England has her way at last, so her rule will soften, and Erin will be at peace. I know you are too Irish to agree with me, Doreen. The young are always apt to judge hastily of their elders, without considering that the gulf that divides them is one of experience as well as years.'

It was seldom that Lord Kilwarden became expansive on this delicate subject with his daughter. Even between those who love each other much, there are subjects that are best left alone. But he was loquacious this evening, seeming anxious to deprecate a harsh verdict on her part. His recent emotion set loose his tongue, and he chatted softly on, explaining his motives and his views—he who was usually so silent and reserved—as the coach rumbled over the rough by-road, which led to the capital by a circuitous route.

When its wheels died away in the distance, Sara sat down to meditate. Robert, then, who had spoken in parables, was planning something which would place him in peril. Perhaps she would look

on him no more. She tried to realise what that would mean for her. During the months when he was in England she was glad not to see him, looking forward to a happier day when he would be all hers, as side by side and hand in hand they would stroll down the hill's shadowed side to the church-yard at its base. She had often wondered which of them would first be summoned hence—picturing a cosy hearth with two aged figures in the chimney-corner, who, their career over, were awaiting a release. On such occasions she had always decided that they would be so old—so old—that a day or two only could possibly intervene between their flitting. After clinging so closely one to the other, in joy and sorrow, through a prolonged probation, but a brief space could keep the pair asunder ere they were joined again for all eternity. So had the simple damsel dreamed, and had been happy in her castle-building, withdrawing her mind to the love-labour of that delicious task, from the tragic scenes in which she wandered—in them, not of them—like one in a mesmeric trance. But now, in the oppressive stillness, she sat resolutely down to look upon herself as a possible actor in the tragedy ; to look for her own image among the troop of women who importuned Heaven to call them hence. She tried to think of herself as she had seen the widows whilst gazing on their swinging husbands—as she had seen the mothers—stony, tearless, with

their murdered sons across their knees. But it was not possible. There are situations so opposed to the order of things that we cannot realise them. Her mind's retina declined to accept the image—threw it back again as one contrary to nature; and yet it was all but certain that Robert—the sensitive, the ardent, the enthusiastic—had deliberately placed his foot upon the bridge of stars which conducts by a track of light to the Walhalla—which leads by the rugged path of torment and of martyrdom to the platform of immortality. She strove, with all the resolution she could muster, to conjure up the dreadful picture, but succeeded only in making her head spin round. Taking up a taper—nervous by reason of the silence of night and her lugubrious mental exercise—she thought she would pay a visit to her father, and look in at my lady's door to announce Doreen's abrupt departure, and prepare the invalid for the noisy coming of Shane and of his guests.

She moved through the chintz sitting-room—past the dark staircase, grim in the flicker of her candle with the panoplies of swords and antique armour—into the great hall with its black oak panels, and was turning to the left, where a rise of a few sculptured steps led into my lady's bedchamber, when her attention was arrested by a noise. What was that? A hum and subdued clatter—growing louder—louder—as it approached. It must be

Shane and his convoy—many horsemen, judging by the sound. Was the danger then so pressing? Her heart beat fast. They would bring certain news, that was some comfort; anything was better than lying on this rack.

Yes, it was Shane's party. There was a ring of many hoofs as the riders wheeled round the turn of the avenue on the crisp gravel under the ancient archway into the stable-yard. Shane's voice could be plainly detected adjuring his guests to abstain from needless noise, since the countess lay ill. Leaving their horses there, they came round to the front on foot, where Sara met them, unbarring the door herself, an apparition of innocence against the background of that gloomy hall. There was Shane, somewhat the worse for liquor, flushed and wild, his hair unribboned, his boots caked thick with mud; and Cassidy smart and neat in a riding-coat, with capes of many colours, and a high-peaked hat of silvery beaver—wondrous fine; and half a dozen followers, evidently not of gentle birth, who bowed with servility to the young lady and sidled cringing along the wall.

The vision of Sara surprised them not a little. 'This was not proper in ticklish times,' Cassidy cried out, after the authoritative manner of a parent. 'Young ladies should not open doors alone at night. How did she know that the party were not Croppies, intent on murder—villainous rapscallions who ought

to be strung up, every man jack of 'em? There were hosts of such about. What was Miss Wolfe thinking of—she who had a head upon her shoulders—to permit of such imprudence?’

‘Where were the servants?’ Shane shouted, forgetful of his mother’s health. ‘Wine, wine! at once; and beds for these honest gentlemen. They were come to stop for a few days, and must be treated well.’

Sara struck the bell to summon the servants, and said that Doreen had started an hour since for Dublin—with her father.

Shane and Cassidy exchanged glances, and both looked put out. ‘Gone to Dublin! where—what for?’ stammered Shane, disconcerted. ‘I told my uncle this very day that I intended to bring some friends to help to defend the house, that his anxiety on her account might be at rest. How imprudent—how silly—how provoking—when the Croppies are mustering along the quays!’

Cassidy frowned him to silence. Where did her father take her? Sure, he would bring her back again? How was it they had not met his carriage on the road?

‘They were gone to the Castle,’ responded Sara, beginning to be frightened, ‘where they would doubtless be quite safe. What was this about Croppies along the quays? Oh! would they please tell her something? People seemed all agreed to

keep things back, as if she were a child. Croppies, did he say? Were not Croppies put down long since? Who was their leader?’

‘Croppies ’tis,’ grunted Cassidy. ‘They’ll be at it by this time, the fools! Who’s their leader? That young donkey Emmett, who’ll swing for it—the idiot!’

Sara clung to a heavy piece of furniture. Like cold steel the certainty cut through her brain that her edifice of cards, erected in simple faith, would fall—had tumbled ere this perhaps; that the tender intercourse of years was not to be; that she was destined to bear her portion of the common cross. She was all at once convinced that Robert and she would never meet upon this globe again. She essayed to speak, but her head whirled; lights danced with shifting colours before her eyes; the floor seemed to heave and rise in billows—yet she did not faint. The servants had brought candles which burned blue and dim and danced up and down, changing to red and green and violet a long way off. She was aware somehow that after a brief consultation Shane had countermanded the claret—that his obsequious friends had received new orders—that the party, donning cloaks again, had mounted and gone clattering away by the unused by-road. The hall-door—wide open—admitted a chill gust which set the candles guttering, but revived her perturbed faculties. Staggering against the door-

post, the girl watched the beacons on the hills, as, fed with furze, they flared up and glowed awhile, then dwindled and died out one by one. She looked across the bay towards Dublin, which was like an anthill possessed by glow-worms, beyond a black abyss. With straining eyes she looked. What would she not have given to know what was passing there? Was Cassidy merely playing off an untimely jest on her by saying what he did? No. Her sick heart whispered that it was all true. Robert's mysterious parable of good things in store clung cold about her heart like a dead hand. Perhaps at this very instant he was being slain—better even than that that he should be taken and undergo the mockery of justice, and pass as others passed—upon the scaffold. Oh! that ardent face—transfigured and inspired by his pure enthusiasm—was she indeed no more to look on it? Was she—see! what was that! A rocket soared into the air from the glow-worms' hill, turning the deep blue to sable, and bursting, vanished in a shower of sparks. What could that mean? It must be a signal. What did it portend? Sara swung to the heavy door, and, drooping on a sofa, sat down and waited.



CHAPTER XI.

ATÉ.



ROBERT (or Mr. Hewitt, for so was he enrolled among the chalked-up inmates of the lodging where he dwelt) betrayed no less emotion than the rest of Dublin citizens when the word flew from mouth to mouth that as an independent nation Ireland was extinguished. He and a few trusty followers were waiting for the official announcement of Ireland's disgrace in their depot—a shambling set of out-houses situated near Merchant's Quay. Sirr's raid, whereby he captured so much material, was annoying no doubt; but Robert was full of his star and the mantle that Theobald had thrown to him.

Of course when the Castle was captured, Dublin would surrender without a blow. He had his scheme prepared, which was instilled into the minds of the Wicklow banditti. They were to creep to their

posts at nightfall and await his signal—a rocket ; then to rush from different points upon the Castle, choosing the narrowest streets in order that if attacked their peculiar style of warfare might prove effective. In a narrow passage, he argued, the pike—a weapon nine feet long—is more telling than a musket with its bayonet. The people in the houses might of course be expected to take part against the military, and give them a warm reception from the housetops with a galling fire of bricks and coping-stones. If necessary they might be employed in dragging up the pavement in the rear of the King's troops, to expose the new-made drains as pitfalls. In any case the regulars, thrown into confusion, would roll over each other, and, helpless in a choked thoroughfare, might be piked and stoned to a man. At prearranged turnings, barriers were to be thrown up, constructed of carts, doors, hogs-heads. This would be done in a few seconds by the willing help of surrounding inhabitants. In all cases the pikemen were bidden to advance at a brisk trot that weight might counterbalance defective discipline ; intrepid men being stationed at the ends of every rank to keep the masses compact and prevent wavering.

Robert's own position (and the rallying-point in case of retreat) was to be the watch-house which stood on the Old Bridge, and which commanded the narrow entry by which troops would come, if

sent for, from Chapelizod. From the tower which crowned the watch-house he would send up his rocket; then, allowing time for the marching of the different divisions to their respective posts, he would leave a sufficient body there to hold the bridge, and hurry to the Castle gates, lest some one might steal the envied privilege of dragging down the detested flag. Elaborate were his arrangements in theory with regard to barricades. Beams had been left lying about with prearranged carelessness, ready to be picked up and slung at a moment's notice. As he donned his uniform—scarlet coat with gold epaulettes, white vest, pantaloons of tender grey—his first-lieutenant (one Quigley, a baker, who rejoiced exceedingly in a huge green plume) remarked with regret that perhaps their object would have been best achieved by taking a hint from Fawkes. ‘Nothing could have been easier, and if successful more complete. Sure, it was the want of a reform in the senate that had brought Erin to this plight. The senate destroyed, she might begin again on the basis of ’82, with hope refreshed and a clean slate.’

Robert looked with displeasure at his truculent lieutenant.

‘What! There were women in the galleries. Destroy the innocent with the guilty, by the hundred?’

‘Haven’t they kilt thousands—women and chil-

dren galore—bad luck to 'em !' retorted the bellicose baker. ' After all, there was no fear of the escape of the guilty now. The hand of the avenger should seek out the recreants and put them to the edge of the sword—stem, root, and branch ; their houses should be heaps of stones ; their homes be made desolate. The world would applaud the vengeance of the downtrodden !'

Robert was displeased by his lieutenant's views. He who by constitutional instinct so dreaded bloodshed, had battled with his fears and girded on the sword of Joshua, carried above physical antipathies by the sacred cause of the oppressed. Yet was it with a secret terror that he listened to such language as that of the gentleman with the green plume. It filled him with loathing. Thank Heaven that he, the chief, was there to keep the men in order, and temper justice with mercy ! The goddess of justice, he believed, should appear white and shining, not dabbled with the gore of those who had done no wrong. So he tried to reason with himself. The work of Joshua, if the legend was to be believed, had been a bloody one, which ascended with a sweet savour of sacrifice in the nostrils of a vengeful Deity. If it was the will of stern Justice that the sinful brethren should be slaughtered, and with them the innocent, why, then responsibility was taken from his hands, and it would be presumption to attempt to dictate.

It was not without a certain trepidation that Robert scanned the timepiece, watching its moving hands. The Commons were still sitting—the farce was not quite over. An hour or two might elapse before the hateful flag was run up to its place. He employed the time in exhorting his followers—there were only fifty of them—to behave with continence to the conquered foe.

‘Some of us,’ he said, ‘may be called to join the band of those who have already given their lives on the scaffold, or on the field. Let not that distress you. Right is on our side if we commit no crimes. Eternal fame is worth more than a few years on this sad earth. The reputation of the few who fall in our holy cause will abide after them, a precious legacy to those whom they love and honour, to those whom they have snatched from slavery—for whom they are proud to perish.’

He talked himself into an exalted fervour, which swept away his scruples. His followers, too, were caught by his enthusiasm. They vowed that no evil deed should smirch their banner; that what they fought for was liberty—the hacking off of chains; that they would give to Europe an example of high-minded patriotism, unblemished by petty license.

Robert was relieved and grateful. It was close on midnight when he drew his sword, and crying, ‘Boys, come on!’ dashed forth into the street.

Though so late, the citizens were not in bed, but standing at their doors and windows discoursing of that which was now an accomplished fact. They looked at the insignificant knot that ran cheering past with consternation.

What manner of men were these who carried sheaves of pikes? What was this youth in martial garb, who waved over his head a sabre? Robert and his lieutenants harangued the citizens, distributed weapons, dragged some who wavered to the depot, where they would find arms and ammunition. They were soon the centre of a delirious crowd, who jumped and sang and danced like maniacs. The lad's hopes beat high, his face beamed with excitement. Heaven had answered promptly; recruits were gathering like sand. Women and children rushed about screaming; wives tugged at their husbands' garments, imploring them to come away, lest peradventure their end should be the gallows. Some one called out that the soldiery were upon them, and then the warriors just now so valiant fled with precipitation up alleys, courts and lanes, dropping their pikes, tearing at those in front who impeded their flight, rolling over and over in the frenzy of their haste to wriggle out of musket-range. Brutality and cowardice are the corollaries of slavery; both made themselves conspicuous on this dreadful night.

Finding that it was a false alarm (for the soldiers

were on guard half a mile away, about the Senate-house), those who a moment since were crouching behind their wives, surged out again as if to protest by deeds against involuntary panic, and ran with yells after the youth in scarlet. To the Old Bridge was a few paces. They gave a prolonged howl as they came in sight of it, which echoed and re-echoed along the Liffey banks, and penetrated even to the Castle, where Lord Cornwallis, his mind relieved in that the work was done, was congratulating the smirking chancellor on the final success of the grand measure. Both started and looked at one another. What a strange uproar! Could it be thunder? Lord Clare opened the casement and peered out. A rocket rose into the air and burst; another howl—louder, more prolonged than the first one. Lord Clare closed the window quietly and shrugged his shoulders, muttering, as he secured the hasp:

‘Sirr was right, then. I really could scarce credit that they should be such idiots. Yet are they silly enough for anything.’ Then turning with a sour smile to the Viceroy, he said: ‘Thank goodness, it’s well over. This ferment is not worth considering. How can I do otherwise than blush at being an Irishman? My Lord Castlereagh thinks, as I do, that the work we have this day finished is a subject for universal thanksgiving.’

Singularly enough, the sympathy of the Viceroy

was not with his colleagues my Lords Clare and Castlereagh, but with those who were by this time brandishing their pikes in Thomas Street, for he pitied the deluded people sorely whose flame of rebellion against the inevitable was making this last melancholy flicker.

The Union was a fact now. It was done; and would ultimately, so soon as sores were healed, be productive of much good, for the people would be protected by a distant but temperate master against the turbulent raging of their own factions. But for all that, this desperate handful who preferred death to slavery, were more worthy of respect than the polished gentleman before him who had sold his own brethren into bondage. So thought the Viceroy; but Lord Cornwallis, bluff soldier though he was, had learned to school his features. He therefore contented himself with observing that nocturnal rioting must be put down, and that the chancellor had better accept a bed in the Castle, considering that if he ventured out among the rioters he would certainly be torn to pieces. Then glancing down into Castle-yard, which was full of soldiers, he bade his guest good-night, and retired to the solitude of his own chamber.

Arrived at the Old Bridge, Robert let off his rocket, while the ever-increasing crowd gibbered and hallooed. The night was very dark. In the transient flare the expectant mob beheld a martial

figure that glittered with gold braid, waving a big sword. A grand figure entirely—who was he? no matter. With him they would fall or conquer, they declared, though the majority of the mob were hazy as to the work which there was to do. The word was given and rippled along the ranks: ‘To the Castle, to slay the tyrant!’ ‘To the Castle, to the Castle!’ they all yelled and bellowed helter-skelter up Thomas Street, for the object was plain and praiseworthy—to storm the palace of the Viceroy. Robert led the way, brandishing his immense blade; the bellicose baker looked after the rear. Both exhorted as many as were within hearing to steadiness and calm. But those behind pushed those who were in front. It was as much as Robert could do to keep his feet. Vainly he bawled. Nobody heard him any more, for all were chattering like excited monkeys; nobody in the dense blackness could distinguish his uniform. He had let a torrent loose, but could not guide it. Half-way up Thomas Street he became conscious of a diversion—the pressure to the front became weaker—something unexpected was happening at the farther extremity of the thoroughfare. The mob were gesticulating—heaving to and fro. Was it a surprise? Were the military come in from Chapelizod? Had they beaten down the little watch-house garrison, or had they—forewarned—approached the scene of action by another route? The bellicose lieutenant would

need assistance and counsel—pray Heaven he was staunch ! Their leader buffeted with the mob, but they heeded him not. It was essential that he should see what was passing, that he should fly to the succour of his second in command, who was battling with this human maelstrom. How dark the night was ! The moon, which was at the full, was clouded over. Raising himself on the steps of a house, he strained his eyes over the sea of faces and detected little lights—flambeaux apparently, which tossed and floundered, then went out. This could be no military attack. The men must be committing some outrage upon persons who had fallen into their hands—innocent persons possibly, who, according to the tenets of the baker, were to suffer for the transgressions of the guilty. Robert was in an agony, for the monster he had conjured into life refused to hearken to his chiding. He cried that the cause must not be sullied, that pure-souled patriots must not play the night-assassin ; but his voice was as the buzzing of an insect. ‘Forward !’ he shouted till he was hoarse ; ‘forward to the Castle !’ He might as well have shouted to the ocean. Those about him pushed and elbowed, screaming wild oaths and execrations ; for, unable to see what was going on, they were half-fearful of treachery, half-anxious to bear their part. Despite his gay accoutrement Robert found himself crushed against a railing, till his ribs threatened to collapse

under the pressure. With a supreme effort he shook himself free, and fell backwards through a doorway. He recognised it—how lucky ! It led by a narrow alley into the adjoining road, which ran parallel with Thomas Street. Sure, this was another mark of Heaven's approbation ; for by following it he could skirt the mob, and, running round, discover the cause of the diversion. The adjoining road was empty ; the terrified householders had closed their doors and shutters and, trembling, were peeping through the chinks. Painful experience had taught them caution. As he sped along, his feet pattering strangely in the solitude, Robert could catch the murmur, as of water dashing upon rocks, over the roofs, a house-thickness off. Running with all his speed, he turned the corner and flung himself against the rolling swell ; beheld with despair a coach—one whose liveries he knew of old—rocking and swaying in danger of being upset, while the horses plunged wildly and the coachman sat paralysed, with a pistol at his ear. The door had been rent from its hinges ; the silken curtains hung in tatters. One of the occupants, a man of fine presence and middle age, had been dragged out, and lay upon the stones surrounded by a crew of savages. The other, a woman, leaned out of the carriage, imploring help in dumb show for the man upon the ground. Convulsed with horror, Robert forced a passage with the flat of his sabre. One light—the

single flambeau which had escaped extinguishing—threw a ghastly glare on the surge of scowling ruffians. Blood trickled from the forehead of the man upon the ground; upon his black satin vest and small-clothes, upon his cambric shirt, as he strove to rise. He staggered up, clutching at a wheel, and waved his hand to obtain a hearing. ‘Good people,’ he panted, but his words reached those only who stood close by, ‘I have never done you harm. I am Kilwarden, chief justice of the King’s Bench.’

‘Justice!’ gibed the baker. ‘She’s gone long since where you shall follow her!’

The mob, which had ebbed in a momentary recoil, flowed forward again with a rush. A dozen pikes were poised and fell. Doreen, who could see what passed within the circle, tossed her helpless arms and filled the night air with shrieks; while Robert, distracted, beat his breast and tore his hair.

A sharp ring of hoofs clattered on the road—nearer—nearer—nearer still. A band of horsemen were approaching at a gallop from the quay; behind—in the distance—a host of cavalry; from the opposite direction the tramp of many feet. The Castle-gates had been opened; the infantry were pouring forth; the mob, finding itself hemmed in, smote right and left in a frantic effort to escape.

The smaller band of horsemen, headed by Shane and Cassidy, were the first to reach the coach.

They drew their *couteaux-de-chasse*, and, beating aside the unwieldy pikes, which were too long for such close quarters, trampled the insurgents down.

‘The lady, Lord Glandore!’ Cassidy shouted. ‘Now’s your time!’

‘Oh, save her!’ raved Robert, in remorse. ‘My God, what have I done? Save her, Lord Glandore!’

Shane stretched out his hand towards his cousin. Chance was favouring him. Under pretext of protecting her, the project planned by the giant could without difficulty be accomplished now. Doreen shrank back.

‘Begone!’ she wailed, filled with the anguish of that heap upon the ground. ‘What have you done with your brother—bastard!’

Shane winced, as from a whip-cut on the cheek. She, too, then knew the fatal secret; but it mattered not, for she was in his power. The military were closing in upon the mob. In the scurry and the darkness he would bear her far away. He was well known; what more natural than that her cousin should rescue the bereaved Miss Wolfe from such a scene?

Dismounting, he strode over the corpse of Lord Kilwarden, and calling on his friends to rally round the coach, prepared to withdraw it from the *melée*.

Upon hearing the name, twice repeated, the man

who had held the pistol to the coachman's ear turned sharply round.

'You then are Lord Glandore?' he asked. 'The curse of God has found you, murderer! You and a few like you slew my father four years ago in sport on Stephen's Green! Do you recall it? He was only an old man—a shoemaker. Maybe you don't, for you've done many such deeds, and you were drunk!'

Shane thrust the importunate babbler aside, and ordered the coachman to urge on his horses.

'I've waited for my revenge all this while, my lord,' muttered the man, 'and you don't escape me now.'

Raising his pistol with steady aim, he shot Shane through the heart, and, diving, vanished in the crowd.

Cassidy was taken aback. Hitherto everything had moved according to his desire. Were his well-constructed schemes to be disconcerted now? He looked up the street and down the street at the compact bodies of troops advancing, then with a rage of longing at Doreen. Yes! his plan was overthrown; a new one must spring out of its ashes. Shane, by virtue of his cousinship, might have borne the young lady with safety through the ranks. He, Cassidy, could hope for no such privilege. Well, better luck next time. But it would not do to lose his footing at Strogue Abbey. *Le roi*

est mort ; vive le roi ! He bethought him of a certain prisoner within the provost, kidnapped the other day, whose position was quite changed by that untoward pistol-shot. All things considered, Mr. Cassidy could not have acted with more wisdom than he did. He left Doreen to the tender mercies of the soldiery, and spurred with utmost speed towards the provost.



CHAPTER XII.

MOILEY'S LAST MEAL.



GREEN speedily recovered her presence of mind, shaken for an instant by the sudden shock of the predicament in which she found herself. The ring-leaders of the riot were, with a few exceptions, netted. The young officers of militia, many of whom had danced at balls with the beautiful Miss Wolfe, were loud in their outcry over the tragedy, vociferous in promises of vengeance. Would she wish the rascals to be lashed, or would pitchcaps please her fancy? The malefactors should swing, every one; that would be a comfort to her, no doubt. Excruciating cats should be manufactured to oblige her. No punishment could be too severe for wretches who had dared to kill two members of the peerage. Where should they take their beautiful charge? Would she go to the Castle, or to her

lamented parent's mansion? Wherever Venus liked, there would Mars escort her. Disciplined by sorrow, Doreen could even at this dark hour consider the grief of others before her own. The Countess of Glandore was sick and shattered. Since Terence's vanishing she had returned to the condition of an owl; what would be the effect on her frayed nerves of the sudden death of her favourite son? Doreen decided, postponing the consideration of her own loss, to drive at once to Strogue, lest tidings should reach her aunt more abruptly than her state would warrant.

It was dawn when Miss Wolfe reached the Abbey—the cold raw dawn of early summer, when nature asserts her right to live despite the tyranny of winter—and she was seized with a new pain on entering the hall; for woe Sara was sitting where she had sank down, to await she knew not what. Alas! for her, too, was she a bearer of evil tidings, and Sara read them on her face, and sighed. The look of deep compassion told but too plainly that her worst forebodings were realised; and that, as a daughter of Erin, she must accept her place in the grim procession of the bereaved. She did not ask for news—preferred, indeed, to hear none, for what news was there that could bring aught but misery? Like a tired child she closed her eyes, and clung to the older maiden in a mute entreaty not to be left alone. This speechless sorrow was painful to

witness. The offices of Miss Wolfe were needed elsewhere, for there was another in the stricken household who must be attended to before the sad *cortège* should arrive. My lady would have to be told that she had lost both a brother and a son. It was with relief then that she heard a creaking on the stairs and perceived Mr. Curran coming down, who, by his appearance, had evidently not been to bed. She, who had learned what loss is, knew the full value of a father's love. Beckoning him to his daughter, she disentangled the cold fingers from about her neck and went away to my lady's bedroom.

Mr. Curran was himself in dolorous mood. Extremely troubled by the rocket which he too had seen, and by hints which, during the past week, had reached him through the proprietress of the Little House, he had been unable to sleep. Groaning in spirit he saw the shambles reopened; the reign of terror recommenced. His country was dead now; Moiley had eaten her up to the last crumb. Might not the sacrifice of her existence bring peace unto her sons? As leaning his cheek upon his hand he sat looking across the tranquil bay at the twinkling lights beyond, his heart became exceeding sorrowful while he reviewed the efforts of his life. Memory stood by in a sable robe. Though he had held himself erect whilst others grovelled; though his courage had remained un-

shaken whilst others quaked and fawned ; how little—how very little—it had been given to him to accomplish ! Yet there was nothing he had wittingly left undone. His political honour was so bright that malice could detect no stain on it. He had worked for others—not for himself. Instead of lifting himself as he might have done above the stormy agitation of his time, he had clung to the heaving of the wave—to rise and fall with it—perchance to be dashed with it upon a rock—with how little result—how little—how very little ! Yet he saw not how he could have acted otherwise. As dawn began to sparkle on the bay, he took up a book to change the current of his pondering—a volume of the grand Greek poets. It opened at the ‘Seven Against Thebes,’ and he read thoughts which were a painful echo of his own. ‘The happiest destiny is never to have been born ; the next best to return quickly to the nothingness from which we came.’ Grand old Titan *Æschylus* ! Was that all his genius could discern ? Never to have been born ! Was that the conviction of the great philosopher ? Mr. Curran looked out on the panorama stretched before him, as fair a prospect as man may desire to look upon. The glittering waters were strewn with flakes of silver ; the looming hills steeped in a golden haze. The beautiful world ! Was its beauty a mockery of human trouble—no more ? It seemed so. Those lovely

hills were teeming with desperate men, reduced by the branding-iron of oppression to the condition of wild beasts. In the blue shadow of those picturesque ravines were cottages—charred, unroofed, deserted. That fairy city that mirrored its whiteness in the bay—glistening, silver-crowned—had been but t'other day the scene of perhaps the most hideous carnival of human wickedness which ever disgraced humanity. Perchance even at this very instant, while the wizened little man was gazing out so dreamily, fresh horrors were being enacted. Truly, 'twere the happiest of destinies never to have looked on the false sheen of the sepulchre at all. But though we may drag at them, the tough fibres of existence are deeply imbedded in our flesh.

Mr. Curran, from his station, marked the return of Lord Kilwarden's coach—the pallid concern of the servants, who were speaking in hushed tones, as though in the awful presence of the Pilgrim. He went downstairs to learn what had happened. It was worse than he expected. Deluded Robert—insane enthusiast! Alas! The advocate would have to stand forth yet once again and wrestle for a life; would have to rouse himself from his dejection to do all that was possible to save this lad. With the urgent need for action Mr. Curran recovered his mental steadiness. He resolved to seek tidings at once of Robert and of Terence; to raise his voice in their behalf. Were both concerned in the disastrous

riot? Were both captured? had both escaped? As he rode past the Little House, Madam Gillin called out that she had something to say. Anxious, on account of Terence's disappearance, the kind lady had sent Jug into town for several days past to ferret out the truth. The hag had discovered that men had been remarked loitering about the Abbey gates; that Terence one evening had been observed by a passing peasant to emerge into the road and go to the water's edge; that there he had been accosted by these self-same suspicious men, who had a boat with them. It was certain that Terence had never been seen in the neighbourhood of young Robert's *depôt*, or in the *mélée* of last night. Hence it was clear that he had departed. Where and why? Was it of his own accord? As for Robert, he was not among the captives. Jug examined them every one, as, heavily ironed, they were marched to Kilmainham in detachments. A man in a uniform plastered thick with gold was rowed out to sea by four sturdy rowers an hour or two ago. In all probability that man was Robert, who had provided for his escape by means of one of the many vessels that were cruising in the Channel. Utterly mad in all other ways, he had shown prudence and forethought in this. He was gone. His noble young life would not be thrown away for nothing—he whose sin was too fond a love for unhappy motherland.

Mr. Curran gave a sigh of thankfulness. Small mercies keep us from breaking down at times. This was good news, at any rate. With courage revived, he could go to the Castle now and demand with a high hand that inquiries as to the fate of Terence should be set afoot. If anything unpleasant was said about Emmett, he could snap his fingers in the Viceroy's face—for the boy was gone, thank goodness, out of his clutches. Moiley would grind her gums for her last morsel in vain. The hungry ogress! She had eaten Ireland and quaffed the best blood of Ireland's children. Her appetite was delicate, it seemed, and clamoured for the best. She declined to lunch off the Battalion of Testimony. The flesh of Sirr and Cassidy was bitter, and she spat it out. She absolutely refused even to nibble, much less to swallow, either of these honest gentlemen.

At mention of Cassidy, Gillin, whose cheeks had puckered into dimples at Curran's badinage, grew grave again. She felt, scarcely knowing why, that Cassidy had something to do with the affair of Terence, who was Earl of Glاندore, secret or no secret, now. The difficulty had been solved in a quite unexpected manner; and in her heart of hearts the worthy woman was glad, though she would have to abandon her desire of seeing Norah adorning the assembly of the *élite*. Ah! deary me, she sighed to herself. There were other fish in the sea. Norah was a comely colleen,

who would get a good husband somehow—maybe a better one than Shane would ever have made, though he was lord of broad acres and had a coronet to bestow on the girl who touched his fancy. But where was the new Earl of Glandore? Curran trotted off to make it his business to find out.

This last armed attempt to free Ireland was the vulgarest and weakest of riots, which would never have been recorded, or have occupied any place in history at all, but for the unfortunate murder of the Lord Chief Justice and his nephew. Their fate—especially that of Lord Kilwarden, who was a kind-hearted gentleman—demanded a scapegoat. Foolish young Robert was the first cause of the disaster. It was essential that he should be held up as an example. Could anything be more provoking than that he should get away? Perhaps he was not gone—perhaps he had landed somewhere. The town-major was commanded to scour the country in all directions. His battalion was well paid and had been very idle of late. It was time that its members should do some service to earn their bread-and-butter. Such were the orders which issued from the Castle, and Curran knew well that they did not emanate from Lord Cornwallis. He was not much surprised, therefore, after crossing Castle-yard, to be ushered into a morning-room, garnished with a huge bureau, at which was sitting, in handsome black velvet trimmed with sable fur, the Chancellor.

Lord Clare beheld with evident pleasure the entrance of his enemy, the man who had been his stumbling-block through his career; for this was the moment of his triumph. He held out his jewelled fingers with a polished bow; rasped out a welcome in his least pleasant voice; and explained that, in the overflow of labour which sprang from the details of yesterday's Great Measure and last night's deplorable catastrophe, both Viceroy and Chief Secretary were so worked off their legs that they had been delighted to accept of his poor services for the transaction of ordinary business.

Lord Clare was rather sorry for Kilwarden, though he had always despised him as a nincumpoop. But this transient cloud of annoyance was dissipated by the sun of yesterday's success and the new vista of power which it opened to his ambition; and Curran looked at him in wonder as he strutted and fussed about, with the comical majesty of a raven.

It has been observed that the greatest political and religious crimes are due to public spirit out of gear. The Irish chancellor was probably honest in his conviction that union was the best thing for Ireland, and it was not his fault if his duty and his interest jumped in the same direction. His standard of morals was so low that the desperate patriotism of such men as Tone or Terence, or Robert Emmett, were as unknown tongues to him. He despised Kilwarden, though he liked him, because he was

weak ; but he hated Curran with all his heart, because, while brave as any lion, he had an inconvenient knack of putting his finger on the chancellor's weak places. But Lord Clare was so jubilant this morning that he was prepared to be generous even to this enemy. Difficulties were over ; he could almost feel the flapping of the united banner overhead, almost hear the packing of the trunks of my Lord Cornwallis. He observed, too, that the crab-apple features of the little man before him seemed old and dried ; that the eyes were glazed which used to flash with fire and dance with fun. He was one of the fools whose heart was broken over a chimera ; of course the successful statesman could afford to be generous to so pitiable a wreck. So he said :

‘ Delighted to see my respected Curran—friend, I suppose, I may not say ? Ah ! well. You always wronged me, my good fellow. Civility was never among your faults. But demagogues would lose half their prestige if they were not crabbed. No wonder you are rude, for you have lost all your tricks. Had you not, in a huff, thrown up your seat in parliament, you might have done much to hurt us ; and that makes you spiteful, I suppose. What do you gain by this ghastly display of martyrdom ? Believe me, Curran, that if you are too good for the world you live in, it will be more comfortable to yourself as well as others to go out of it. That’s

why Wolfe Tone helped himself out of it, I presume, and I for one am vastly obleeged to him. Talking of that reminds me of last night's folly—a sad affair—a sad affair; but can't be helped, you know. A drop of trouble in the sea of bliss which yesterday's decision gave us. You don't feel quite that way? Ah! well. People's opinions differ, don't they? The one I'm most distressed about is our old friend the countess. She will feel that fellow's fate most terribly, the more so that he was a ne'er-do-well; though there are reasons why it's best as it is. Your *protégé* is the holder of the family honours now?

Curran nodded, wondering what his enemy was aiming at; while the latter, scanning his features, perceived with pleasure that my lady's secret had never been divulged to him. It was well that that secret should lie in as few hands as possible.

'Where is Terence?' Curran inquired bluntly.

'Terence! I know not,' replied the other, in his turn surprised. 'Has anything befallen him?'

'You *really* do not? Then it's Cassidy who's done it,' cried out Curran. 'He's been kidnapped for some hellish purpose!'

Knowing Cassidy as he did, the chancellor looked disturbed. It was quite possible that this worthy might be up to his tricks again. Had not he, Lord Clare, warned the young man against him once, when he was too stupid to take the hint? This scoundrel

was still then, with some dark intent, pursuing him. Why had he not been told of this before? It was most serious. Terence kidnapped, evidently by Cassidy! It would never do. Would the countess have to bewail both sons? Not if her old friend could help it. Touching a gong, he gave rapid directions that every prison in Dublin should be searched immediately for the missing prisoner; that, if found, he was to be taken back at once to Strogue, whither the chancellor would proceed in his coach, in the company of his esteemed friend.

But the proposed drive, during which Lord Clare promised himself to twit his fallen foe, was not to be. At the bottom of the stairs he was assailed by a troop of suitors, who would not be refused. Reluctantly he was compelled to allow Curran to trot off on his pony, promising to follow in an hour, at most.

The lawyer rode along, marvelling at the sphynx-like chancellor. Here was a man who reeked of the blood of the peasantry; who would, if he could, have burned all the Catholics in one vast bonfire, and who yet was capable of feeling emotion on behalf of a white-haired old friend. Then he thought of his dear daughter Sara, who seemed stunned by last night's catastrophe. Did she care so much, then, for this lad? It was fortunate that he should have been able to escape. That would save Sara much agony. She would have to be taken abroad for change of scene, and, peradventure, in a foreign

land might find the brook of Lethe. How glad her father would be if he too might find it; but that was past wishing for. He was too old to receive new impressions, while Sara would speedily forget.

With shoulders rounded and head bowed, Mr. Curran trotted back to Strogue. Feeling that he was no longer able to fight as he used to do, it was a wonderful relief to think that Robert was gone away. Time was when it was exhilarating to break a lance with my Lord Clare. But the sturdy advocate had received his passport for the undiscovered country, and, but for Sara's sake, was little inclined to murmur if he were required to use it soon. It was clear to him that there must be an exodus—to America—anywhere. He and Sara should be the first to go; and perhaps he might be permitted to linger on until her future was in some way assured.

He trotted along the road, absorbed in sorrowful considerations, until, just as he passed under the hedge which belonged to the Little House, he was rudely roused from reverie. Madam Gillin was gesticulating like a madwoman.

‘Hist!’ she whispered. ‘The boy’s not gone! Whillaloo! ’Twas the baker that escaped! It’s at Strogue he is this cursed minute. The candle’s there, the moth is booming round it! Maybe there’s time still. Bid him be off, jewel, do; and I’ll keep watch lest any come. Jug’s looking out on the back road.’

‘Murther!’ ejaculated Curran, wide awake now. ‘They’re scouring the country for him. Oh, the silly lad!’ And beating his pony with unwonted vehemence, the lawyer galloped through the park-gates, along the short turn of avenue which led to the Abbey, and, leaving the astonished animal to recover how he could, hurried up the steps into the hall.

The door was idly swinging, but no one was visible in the vestibule nor in the dining-room, nor in Miss Wolfe’s boudoir. Hark! Subdued voices, murmuring further on, in the tapestry-saloon. He moved quickly thither, and, standing on the threshold, stamped his feet in the impotent fury of his wrath. There was Robert—haggard and unkempt—still in the pinchbeck uniform, torn and bespattered now, with a peasant’s frieze-coat thrown over it—a ridiculous disguise. He was kneeling by a couch whereon lay Sara, her face turned towards him, her eyes fixed full on his with a wild unreasoning longing, while he chafed her hands and kissed them. The tall and graceful figure of Doreen leaned against the sculptured garlands of the mantelpiece, as she gave the homage of silent sympathy to the voiceless parting of this pair, while her mind wandered in the cypressed graveyard of her own sorrow. That heap of black satin, prone under the carriage-wheels, would never leave her memory so long as life should last. Stroke had succeeded stroke, and she winced no more.

All three looked up when Curran stamped his feet, and Robert advanced towards him timidly.

‘I have done wrong, terribly wrong, sir,’ he said, with a sigh. ‘I can make no atonement, except by laying down my life.’

‘A useful sacrifice, truly!’ the incensed lawyer rejoined. ‘You don’t think of *her*—whom you are killing!’

‘The breath of the tomb is on me!’ implored the lad, with a dry mouth. ‘Spare any addition to my misery. I was infatuated, too certain of success, and knew she would be so glad when I succeeded. Those lives—those lives! Would success have blotted out the recollection of them? I go, and it is well that I should go, though I leave to so many a legacy of sorrow.’

There was a dreamy resignation about the youth, as of one who does wrong and leaves others to bear the brunt, which infuriated Curran. If ever there was a moment for promptitude to the exclusion of dreaminess, this was that moment, for the sake of others as well as himself; and here he stood, soliloquising like a Hamlet—the unpractical dangerous dreamer!

‘You might have got away, and did not,’ said the lawyer, tartly. ‘Do you know that the country is being scoured for you—that if you are taken the scrag-boy will make short work of you? You don’t care, maybe. Is it nothing to us—to *her*?’

‘Perhaps there is still time. Get ye gone by the postern in the rosary. The peasantry are staunch. You might lie in a cabin under the bed-furniture till night, and then steal out to sea under cover of the darkness.’

‘If I fall into their hands I will speak my own defence, sir,’ murmured Emmett, without moving.

‘And much good may it do you—fool!’ shouted the enraged councillor. ‘Don’t stand shilly-shallying here like a great goose. Sara, order him to go. If he’s hanged you’ll have yourself to thank for it.’

Sara took no heed, but lay back, watching the dear youth—as white as wax, like one in a trance.

There was a turmoil in the next room, a rustle of silk, an upsetting of chairs, and Mrs. Gillin darted through the doorway. ‘Is he gone?’ she asked. ‘Then it’s too late! There’s a body of sodgers marching in. They are surrounding the house.’

Robert passed his hands through his matted hair. His belief in his star was gone. He was plainly not destined to be a Joshua. He panted to join those who had crossed the rubicon. On the boundary-line of the other life we are apt to plunge into a selfish beatitude, forgetting the trouble which our exit may entail on those whom we leave behind.

In a few moments his fate was fixed. The regular tramp of disciplined men was heard on the gravel with a ring of matchlocks. Then a figure darkened

the casement. It was Major Sirr demanding admittance. Robert opened the window himself, and the town-major's lambs streamed in. Doreen gave a sharp exclamation of surprise—for one of the group was Cassidy—another, who came forward with arms outstretched, was Terence—safe and sound.

The town-major's bushy eyebrows came down upon his nose, as, grinning, he struck Robert on the shoulder. 'Do you recollect, young fellow,' he railed, 'how anxious you twice were to be arrested? I told you then that your turn would come soon enough. It has come now, and I hope you are satisfied, though I fear I shan't keep you long.'

Robert Emmett bowed absently, as if he but half-heard, and, kneeling by Sara's chair again, muttered—forgetful of lookers-on: 'Oh, my love—my love. Do we part thus? I hoped to have been a prop, round which your affections might have clung; but a rude blast has snapped it—they have fallen across a grave!' Then, twining her fair hair about his fingers with affectionate regret, he fell a dreaming, whilst Madam Gillin gulped down her sobs.

'I go into my cold and silent tomb,' he whispered, as he stroked the baby-fingers of his mistress. My lamp of life is nearly extinguished; the grave opens to receive me, and I sink into its bosom.'

Major Sirr perceived with his usual tact that this sentimental scene was producing a bad impression,

and must be interrupted. The extreme youth and woe-begone appearance of Robert—his half-distracted, half-inspired look—moved the spectators to tears. Surely he was too young—too much of a visionary—to be held really accountable for the storm that he had raised. As to the frail girl, she appeared to be beyond sublunary cares. Lulled by angel-strains, she was gazing upon a world which has nothing in common with ours—what she saw was beautiful, and true, and real—the people flitting round her couch were the unreal shades. The town-major tapped his prisoner's arm, and begged him to make haste. 'I must obey orders,' he said. 'They are straightforward, and concise as Lord Clare's always are. I've brought one prisoner here, and must take another hence. Come along!'

Mrs. Gillin, unhooking a pair of scissors from her girdle, between convulsive hiccups, handed them to Doreen. The one woman understood the other's thought. Doreen gently cut the longest tress from Sara's golden head and pressed it into Robert's palm.

'Thanks,' he said, with a quiver of the lip. 'I will wear this in my bosom when I mount the scaffold. I am ready, gentlemen, and will not detain you. Before I leave the world—and I leave it now when I leave my friends—I have one request to make. May the charity of oblivion be accorded to my memory! Let no one write my epitaph; for as

no man who knows my motives dares now to vindicate them, let not prejudice or ignorance asperse them. Let them and me repose in peace, and my tomb remain uninscribed !'

This would never do. Major Sirr grasped him roughly by the coat-tail to drag his prisoner away. The soldiers, accustomed to the business, closed in quickly. But ere Robert went, Mr. Curran, with tears streaming down his rugged features, placed his arms about his neck, and held him in a long embrace.

Then was the last of Moiley's victims marched away under a strong guard, and the rest were left to their own sombre meditations. A stillness of oppression fell on all as Curran, Terence, and Doreen gathered round prostrate Sara. Mr. Cassidy found himself awkwardly situated, for nobody took any notice of him. Vainly his boots creaked, while he coughed behind his hand. Mrs. Gillin was no longer afraid, for she as well as others saw that, the tussle over, the final clearing away of Catholic disabilities was only a matter of time—that even if he launched the thunderbolt at her, in terror of which she had held her peace concerning what she knew of him, it would signify little. With the Union a new era was dawning—all the Catholics felt that—one in which Irish and English interests would grow to be the same in the future, when the sea of blood was bridged—one in which the last vile fragments of the Penal Code must soon be swept away—a relic

of the dark ages. Even if Mr. Cassidy were to declare publicly that she took her Protestant daughter with her to the mass, it was possible she might escape tribulation for the enormity. So Mr. Cassidy coughed at her in vain. Curran had never liked him. Doreen knew too much of him. It was a satisfaction to all, himself included, when, with a clumsy excuse, he twirled his fine beaver and backed himself out of the apartment.

The old earl, his parent, smirked from his frame upon the new wearer of the coronet. Was the simpler more full of meaning than it used to be, or was it merely the limner's conventional flattery? The desire expressed with such solemnity upon his death-bed was accomplished; the wrong was righted now—at last.

An unconscious mesmeric sympathy beyond their own volition fixed the gaze of three people upon that portrait of the wicked earl, while the same thought struck each of them in turn. Doreen withdrew her eyes, and they fell on Terence, who nodded, and striding towards his mother's bed-chamber, opened the door softly and entered. Though the day was bright and mild there was a large fire on the hearth, before which crouched my lady, wrapped in a loose white wrapper, supported by many pillows. The windows were dimmed to twilight. Shane's favourite hounds, Aileach and Eblana, sat on their haunches with their muzzles on her

lap, in wistful expectancy of that which they might never see. She took no notice of the intruder, supposing that it was Doreen, till recognising a heavier footstep and a dreaded voice, she shrank away from him with a moan, as if she had received a blow.

‘Mother!’ Terence began.

My lady crawled along the carpet on her knees—a bundle of loose draperies—her head bent down, her white hair straggling, towards her son, who recoiled. The aspect of this piteous ruin—this soul-stricken wreck, the mainspring of whose life was broken, whose courage had ebbed quite away—suffused the heart of Terence with unutterable pity. He raised his mother in his stalwart arms, and pressing his warm lips to hers, whispered :

‘Hush, hush! I know all. You have but one child now. Bless me!’

* * * * *

But little more remains to be told. Evil, though it seemeth to flourish like the bay-tree, doth not always prosper in the long run. Lord Cornwallis turned his back on Ireland, glad to depart. Cassidy and Sirr came to blows, and fought a duel on the subject of Terence’s release. For those worthies had arranged to share together the reward which Shane was to have given for their little service. But Shane’s murder altered the face of matters, and Cassidy, with a presence of mind which did him honour, flew off at once to set free the new Lord Glandore and claim the merit of

having done so. The town-major, however, knew his man. The giant's endeavours were fruitless, and Sirr found him blustering at the provost-gate when, in obedience to Lord Clare's behest, he came, with feigned surprise, to carry the new lord back to his ancestral home. Sirr saw through his crony's intention, and branded him hotly with being 'no gentleman,' and a 'mean fellow ;' whereupon the two met on Stephen's Green, and, after a few passes, declared 'honour satisfied.' The nests of both were well feathered. One became noted for pious works ; the other set up as a patron of art, and formed the finest collection of snuff-boxes in the three kingdoms.

Robert Emmett was hanged in Thomas Street, and met his fate with fortitude. The same enthusiasm which allured him to his doom enabled him to support with serene courage its utmost rigour. His extreme youth and well-known talents filled the spectators with grief. He sang 'The Sword' with a firm and mellow voice, which never quailed till, the board on which he stood being tilted up, he was set free to join the band that were impatiently awaiting him beyond the Styx.

Lord Clare's ambition was not gratified. He who had been so unprincipled and arrogant, so insolent and overbearing, his cleverness no longer needed, was tossed aside by his employers. He carried his pretensions into the English senate, and was igno-

miniously insulted there by his Grace the Duke of Bedford. Pitt gave him no comfort, observing with a yawn that he was sorry his lordship was a failure; that he would do well, perhaps, to return to Ireland. He who had so deceived was himself betrayed. For a few years he lingered in obscurity, being heard on one occasion, when near his end, to mutter with sombre meaning: ‘Earl and Lord Chancellor! It would have been better for Ireland if I had lived a sweep!’ He died—some said of chagrin, and some of remorse. Showers of dead cats were thrown upon his coffin. His last eager directions were that his papers should be carefully destroyed unread.

Lord Castlereagh, as all the world knows, cut his throat.

Government, acting on the advice of the Marquis Cornwallis, accorded a free pardon to the new Lord Glandore, whose romantic history softened King George’s heart—even though he added yet another to his sins by marrying a Catholic. It is possible that his Majesty’s ire might have found vent in a seizure of the property of the incorrigible traitor; but, happily for the latter and for the nation, the King’s few wits deserted him, and he was shut up—as he should have been many years before.

Lord and Lady Glandore sojourned abroad awhile, basking in the softness of a kindlier clime. They had suffered too much in Ireland to feel aught but

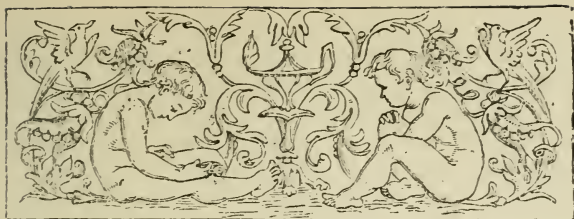
pain in dwelling there. Moreover, they had those under their care whose sorrow hung over them, whilst theirs was at length assuaged.

The old countess and the Currans travelled over Europe with them. My lady never fully rallied. Though her son and daughter lavished every attention upon her which affection could dictate, the ghost was never laid, the startled expression never departed from her face. When they were present she tried to assume cheerfulness; but if one or other came on her unawares, it was to feel that her heart was not with them—that it was buried in the vault on the verge of Dublin Bay, by the side of the unlucky Shane.

Curran did rally to a certain extent, and returned to Ireland to win new esteem as Master of the Rolls. But that was long after gentle Sara died, an event which caused Doreen deep grief, though Terence reminded her that it was for the best. Her reason went from her, so that she never knew of Robert's fate, but would sit crooning the weird ditties of her native land for hours together, and hearken for his coming with a vacant glee that was heartrending to those who loved her: and all who knew her loved gentle Sara. Slowly she faded and sank to rest—peacefully, serenely, with no last buffeting against the trammels of this life—as an infant sinks into refreshing slumber. To her, if not to others, was Heaven kind. Though she

was given a cross to bear, yet she never felt its weight, nor knew that she stood in the ranks of the bereaved. It was of her that a gifted poet sang :

‘ Oh ! make her a grave where the sunbeams rest
When they promise a glorious morrow ;
They’ll shine o’er her sleep like a smile from the West,
From her own loved island of sorrow !’



TO THE READER.

It has been the habit of novelists, for some reason or another with which we have nothing to do at present, to associate the Irish character with rollicking fun, naïve bungling, and mighty fine tastes of the brogue; and it occurred to me some time since that English readers who are surfeited with orthodox Hibernian jollities might be glad, for a change, to look on Pat from his shadowed side; to contemplate his dreary pilgrimage through the Valley of the Shadow of Death; to pause for a moment over the events which have bound round his character with sorrow and hedged him about with grief. The history of Ireland has been so perverted by mendacious faction that the truth lies deeply interred. Protestant has vilified Catholic, and Catholic Protestant, to the extent which is inevitably associated with religious rancour. My sympathies being specially with neither party, I have endeavoured to weigh the evidence in a free and independent spirit, and have come to the conclusion, as might have been expected, that both were in a measure right and both wrong, considering that both were actuated by grievances of a more or less awful character, which, being tinged by a colour of religion, drove them both to madness and excess.

One of the chief difficulties with which an historical

novelist has to contend, is the question how far imagination may be permitted successfully to fight with fact. Conversely, even reverend historians are beset by this trouble. Walter Scott, Chateaubriand, Michelet, hardly allow us to separate romance from history, and history from romance.

Being desirous of giving a true picture of a time, clothed in romantic garb, I, in my last novel, conscientiously pointed out the peccadilloes which lay cunningly in ambush in its chapters; and, being still anxious to keep my conscience clear, I deem it advisable now to repeat the process.

In the construction of this work I was deliberately guilty of two crimes, both of which, I consider, are attended with extenuating circumstances.

The first concerns the compact between the Executive and the state-prisoners, and is a sin of omission; for although the facts and the disgraceful behaviour of the English King and Government are truthfully related, it did not suit the scheme of the story to enter into all the motives which impelled the United Irishmen to sacrifice their feelings, and agree to so singular an arrangement. The rebel leaders submitted to examination by the secret council in hopes of saving the life of Oliver Bond; but as Oliver Bond was not one of my chosen puppets, I considered it permissible to leave him in his grave.

The second crime is one of much greater enormity. To suit the purpose of the weft, I have presumed to ante-date Emmett's rising by two years and a half. The United standard first waved over Dublin Castle on January 1, 1801, whilst Emmett's riot did not take place till July, 1803. But I hold that, for the purposes of romance, the romancist may be permitted to draw events together, though he is in no case to be allowed to transpose them. At the time of the Union Robert Emmett was away in France on treasonable business; but it is in every way probable that if he had been in Ireland he would have acted as I have made him act. There is ample testimony to prove that the dwellers in the country (as opposed to the dwellers in the towns) were

ready as early as the winter of '79 to make a new attempt if they could have found a leader, and that they waited for two years simply because Emmett did not call them to arms till then.

Lord Cornwallis writes to General Ross under date of 1779 : ' We have every reason to believe that the French are undertaking a serious attack, and from the most authentic channels we learn that the disaffected are more active than ever in swearing and organising the southern provinces.'* And again later : ' That the French will persevere in their attempt to invade Ireland there can be no doubt, and if they should succeed, which God forbid, in establishing a war in this country,'† etc. At page 86 we find, ' Though the new Directory was never fully formed, yet the spirit of rebellion was carefully kept alive—the flame subtly fanned—till it burst out in 1803 under Robert Emmett.' H. Alexander, Esq., writes to the Rt. Hon. T. Pelham under date January, 1800, that ' Dublin is much and seriously agitated.'

My portrait of Lord Clare differs in some respects from the usual conception of that statesman ; but I have diligently studied everything concerning him which was attainable, and am convinced that his character was as it is here depicted.

I gratefully take this opportunity of thanking the Press for the unanimously indulgent manner in which they treated ' Lady Grizel'—with one exception, that of a certain weekly print whose *raison d'être* is its scurrility ; and I further embrace this occasion of reminding the anonymous critic of the said ill-natured print that facts may be slightly distorted for a set purpose rather than through ignorance, and that the critic doth not transcendently exalt either his wisdom or his attainments by pointing out with magnificent scorn that such an event took place in January instead of March ; for Macaulay's celebrated schoolboy could do as much or more in a diligent half-hour by the help of that invaluable book

* Cornwallis Correspondence, vol. iii., p. 56.

† Ibid., p. 60.

'The Encyclopædia of Chronology.' For the special benefit of the said sapient critic, however, I append to this discourse a list of the works upon Irish affairs to which I have been indebted, in order that he too may improve his mind, and be the better prepared to hold up to derision the rents and slits in my poor pasteboard armour.

LEWIS WINGFIELD.

GARRICK CLUB,
July, 1879.

LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED IN THE COURSE
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 BARRINGTON'S HISTORIC MEMOIRS OF IRELAND, 2 vols.
 MADDEN'S IRISH POLITICAL LITERATURE, 2 vols.
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